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INTRODUCTION

THE Eastern Question is always with us, for the fate of the British Empire is bound up with it; and the kernel of the Eastern Question lies in India, the country which has contributed most to the wealth, prosperity, and power of the Empire. But neglect of the study of Indian history, or 'colossal ignorance' of it, has never been regarded as a disqualification for the highest positions in the Government of India. The Imperial Parliament takes it for granted that a capable British Minister is as well qualified for dealing with the problems of Indian administration as he is for any other office of State.

It is a significant fact that Indians generally prefer an administrator who has not been through the mill of the Indian Civil Service, from the idea that he will be likely to treat high political questions in a more liberal and unbiased spirit. And in this matter the Indian has intuitively understood the secret of the astonishing success of British rule in the East. Indian philosophy has always discriminated between two kinds of knowledge—*intuitional* or divinely inspired wisdom, and traditional, or that which is acquired by training and experience; and the former has always been held to be in the highest plane. It is not the educational equipment or administrative efficiency of the bureaucracy which makes the vast majority of Indians accept British rule as the best possible one, and brings Hindu and Musalman to rally round the flag of the Empire at the most critical time of its existence. It is that they recognise that the present Aryan rulers of India, in spite of 'colossal ignorance' and the mistakes which are the result of it, are generally animated by that same love of justice and fair-play, the same high principles of conduct and respect for

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humanitarian laws, which guided the ancient Aryan statesmen and lawgivers in their relations with the Indian masses.

Our Indo-Aryan brothers have perhaps more than most Britons of that deep veneration for true knowledge which has always been characteristic of the Aryan race. They recognise in modern European scientific research, so far as it is disinterested and not prostituted for base purposes, the culmination of the quest which their own divinely inspired *rishis* followed for thousands of years, and they eagerly desire to have the doors of this new temple of Sarasvatī opened to them wider. Lord Macaulay, in spite of his contempt for Indo-Aryan culture, is still regarded by them as a great statesman and benefactor of India—and from their point of view rightly so; for, though profoundly ignorant of Indo-Aryan history, his intuitive genius showed him the path leading to an Indian Renaissance, though he himself totally miscalculated the direction it would take.

But neither Great Britain nor India can always expect to be so well served or afford to regard ignorance of Indian history as the best qualification for Anglo-Indian statesmen. Not only the British nation but all Europe pays dearly for lack of understanding of the Eastern Question. It is not improbable that future historians in reviewing the causes of Europe's present political bankruptcy will find the chiefest in the fatal obsession of British statesmen that for the security of our Empire in India it was necessary or expedient for Great Britain to bolster up Turkish misrule in Asia and in Europe—an idea deeply rooted in Anglo-Indian official traditions—and in the misreading of Muhammadan history, which even now makes Turks, Pathāns, and Mongols the regenerators of idolatrous Hindu India and the cultured inspirers of all that is noble in Indian architecture. Deeper insight into the psychology of Indian history would have added more power and wisdom to the foreign policy of Great Britain and to the cause of the Allies—which is the Aryan cause.

The course of the Great War has shown how groundless were the fears that Indian Muhammadans, as a body, would desire

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to prolong the unholy alliance between Islam and the powers of evil which Turkish rulers, young and old, in Europe and in Asia, have maintained for so many centuries. India herself has been in the past one of the chief sufferers from this alliance—as Muhammadan historians have clearly shown—and Indian Muhammadans love their motherland too well and respect Islam too much to become the tools of the criminal conspiracy which plunged Europe into a mad war—a conspiracy in which the purblind politicians of Young Turkey believed they saw a great opportunity for themselves and their country.

But neither British nor Turkish politicians can claim much credit for clarity of vision with regard to the Eastern Question. The Aryan spirit of British statesmen saved us from the folly and crime of remaining passive onlookers in the great struggle; but had their predecessors understood Indian history better the catastrophe might have been minimised or possibly averted. The modern scientific method of Oriental research, inspired by German thoroughness and German lack of psychological insight, has since the days of Macaulay and Mountstuart Elphinstone added greatly to the material for the history of India, but has not done much for the better interpretation of it. In one point, indeed, of vital importance for ourselves, it has even led us further astray. Oriental scholars of the nineteenth century, though they failed completely to understand the predominance of Aryan inspiration in Indian art and to recognise national art as a key to the true interpretation of history, at least firmly grasped the essential truth that before the Muhammadan invasions, if not afterwards, it was Aryan culture which gave India its high place among the civilisations of the world and inspired its greatest intellectual achievements. But many modern writers of Oriental history proclaim as the latest discovery of science that the early Aryan invaders of India, who won the undying veneration of the people as mighty seers and leaders of men, were only successful soldiers, versed in the arts of chivalrous warfare, and that they borrowed their finer culture from the Dravidians, and other civilised races

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they conquered. Almost they would persuade us that the intellectual, high-souled Aryan is a myth, or reduce the historical sum of Aryan achievements to the common factor that might is right and military despotism the best of all possible governments.

Let us by all means construct history on a scientific basis: but the scientists should not forget that the master-builder must be an artist as well as a mathematician. The historian who totally misunderstands the ideas which inspire the mind of a people may use his material with the utmost scientific skill, but the result will hardly be anything but a complete falsification of the most vital and informing historical truths. And such a total misunderstanding of the Indian mind, as it is expressed in the great monuments of Indian art, runs throughout all the standard histories of India which are the text-books for British statesmen and administrators. Is it not reasonable to suppose that this explains why Indians prefer the 'colossal ignorance' of the British statesman to the imperfect learning of the experts? For though Indians themselves may not always be better informed, it must be peculiarly humiliating to them to be constantly told by their rulers that in political science India has never at any period of her history attained to the highest level of Europe; that Freedom has never spread her wings over their native land; that they are heirs to untold centuries of 'Oriental despotism' and must wait patiently until the highly cultured political fruits of the West can be successfully grown in the virgin soil of India.

Whether unintentional or not, no greater spiritual injury can be done to a people than to teach them to undervalue or despise the achievements of their forefathers. To overvalue them can hardly be a mistake. Not the least valuable of our spiritual resources in the Great War has been the desire of every man and woman to uphold the honour of their race, or country, or province, or town, or school, or family, inspired by the traditions, legendary or otherwise, of a glorious past. And it cannot be to the advantage either of the British Empire or of India that British statecraft in India should be based

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upon historically false premises, and that India's present Aryan rulers should misunderstand or ignore the political ideals and methods by which the great men of our own race made the people of India accept Aryan domination as the greatest of divine blessings. The fact that Aryan principles of polity had been to a great extent perverted or forgotten when Great Britain assumed the sovereignty of India does not absolve us from the obligation not only of studying carefully the history of Aryan India, and of preserving with religious care what remains of its monuments, but of following the example of the greatest of Indian Muhammadan rulers, Akbar, in making Indo-Aryan traditions the central pillar of the Empire. In thus honouring our Aryan forerunners in India we shall both honour ourselves and make the most direct and effective appeal to Indian loyalty.

The average Briton understands Indian loyalty as the most decisive proof of the complete success of British rule and the attachment of Indians to the British Crown. The historian who accepts that as a full and sufficient explanation is very far from understanding the Indian mind and has a very limited perception of the truths of Indian history. Indian loyalty is not born of attachment to European political theories or to any modern European form of government. It is a sentiment which is deeply rooted in Indo-Aryan religion and in devotion to the Aryan ideal. The idea of Vishnu the Preserver and King of the Universe has its primitive roots in the ideal Aryan temporal ruler and spiritual leader who protected his people with his strong right arm, upheld the Aryan law of righteousness, and maintained the liberties of the Aryan freeman. *Bhakti*, or whole-souled devotion of man to God, which is one of the leading motives of Indian religious thought, is the consecration of the loyalty of the Aryan soldier towards his chieftain to the ideals of spiritual life. Loyalty is a sentiment which has been nourished by every Indian religious teacher, Brahman as well as Kshatriya. It has been the corner-stone of Indian polity from the remotest antiquity. Krishna preached it in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The heroes of the *Rāmāyana* and

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Mahābhārata, whose lives and conduct are still the inspirat of the Indian masses, were the living exemplars of it. T Buddha built up his Sangha upon it. Akbar used it as t foundation of his Dīn-Ilāhī.

Even the Indian who has been sedulously taught in Angl Indian schools and British universities to undervalue o despise Indo-Aryan culture has the same subconscious feelin of loyalty to the Aryan ideal, though he finds his inspiration in the pages of English history instead of in the annals of India national life. Indian loyalty to the British Empire and the British Crown is therefore in its fullest content a feeling of devoted attachment to those Aryan principles of conduct and Aryan national ideals which Indians as well as Britons have upheld both in peace and in war, in life and in death. Let us therefore beware lest our own disloyalty to those principles and ideals should inspire Indians with suspicion or distrust, and let us not flatter ourselves that the magnificent demonstration of loyalty which the War has called forth from all classes is an expression of complete satisfaction with things as they are and of gratitude for the blessings of British rule. If national art has any significance as an indication of the springs of human action and as an index of human progress, not even the most optimistic Anglo-Indian, looking at the monuments of British rule in India, can maintain that we have yet gone so far even as Akbar went in restoring India to the full height of her former Aryan civilisation. This we have not yet done either on the material or spiritual plane, and India, on the whole, still values spiritual more than worldly gifts, though Europe would persuade her that she is lacking in true insight.

The so-called progressive politician, who treats Indian history as a book no longer read, tells us that we must look forward and not backward; that we can no longer build as Akbar built; that India can gain little or nothing by studying her own past; that East must be West and forget that she was East. Pretending to be a realist with a scientific political programme based upon actualities, he is ignorant of the funda-

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ental economic and social conditions by which a prudent nd far-seeing State policy must be governed and blind to the hings of everyday Indian life which pass before his own eyes. he logic of history, ancient or modern, Indian or European, s lost upon him.

But to the Briton who can divest himself of insular racial rejudices and of the German habit of thinking, the study of Indo-Aryan political science will have a deep significance, though he may not take a special interest in Indian affairs. For the ancient Aryan rulers of India were confronted by political, economic, and social problems in many ways similar to those with which modern British statesmen and social reformers are struggling, and their solutions of them, according to all the evidence of history, were much more satisfactory to the people at large than any which modern Europe has found. The freedom and general happiness attained by the people of Great Britain with the help of Parliamentary institutions and the richest revenues of the world can hardly be compared with that which Indians within the Aryan pale enjoyed both before and after the fifth century A.D.—the time which we regard as our Dark Ages, and theirs. The Indo-Aryan constitution, built up by the highest intelligence of the people upon the basis of the village communities, and not wrung from unwilling war-lords and landlords by century-long struggles and civil war, secured to the Indian peasant-proprietor not only the ownership of the land, but very considerable powers of self-government. The powers of the central Government, though they might often be abused, were at least delegated to it by the people themselves, and limited by unwritten laws which by common consent were given a religious character. An interesting illustration of the strength of such laws is given by Mr Sidney Webb in the preface to Mr Matthai's valuable book on *Village Government in British India*. Officially the Indo-Aryan political system has long been regarded as dead. But, says Mr Webb, an able Collector of long service in Central India, who was totally unaware of any survival of that system in the villages over which he ruled,

was led to make inquiries into the matter.[1] He then discovered "in village after village a distinctly effective, if somewhat shadowy, local organization, in one or other form of *panchayat*, which was, in fact, now and then giving decisions on matters of communal concern, adjudicating civil disputes, and even condemning offenders to reparation and fine." This form of local government, though it has no statutory warrant and is not recognised by British tribunals, has gone on silently functioning during centuries of 'Oriental despotism' and under British rule, "merely by common consent and with the very real sanction of public opinion." When Indo-Aryan law and order prevailed in India in the long centuries before the Muhammadan invasions, the economic and political status of the Indian peasant was certainly far higher than that of the English peasant of the twentieth century, if the description of the latter's condition given by Mr Maurice Hewlett may be considered approximately true: "robbed, pauperised, terrorised, mocked with a County Council of landlords, a District Council of tenant-farmers, and a Parish Council without powers." [2]

The British factory-hand and dweller in city slums sings when he goes to war because war is for him a release from servitude and misery often far more degrading than the Indian caste system at its worst. He does not sing in times of peace. He is then chained down to a daily life in which there is no joy or freedom—the slavery of modern industrialism. He struggles vainly to free himself from it by the organisation of trade unions, and only adds to the political machine another form of tyranny which often is a menace to the whole imperial fabric. The co-operative trade and craft guilds of India

[1] A still more striking case illustrating the survival of Indo-Aryan institutions, silently functioning unknown to the British authorities, is that of the Indian master-builder, whose labours contributed so much to the making of Indian history. His existence and work in the present day were both unknown and unrecognised officially until the Government of India was led to make the specific inquiries which resulted in the remarkable revelations published in the Archaeological Survey's Report on Modern Indian Building, 1913.

[2] Letter to the *Daily News*, November 11, 1916.

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man to enjoy life, gave him self-respect and technical skill, and at the same time served religious interests of the State. The student of Indian history may also be led to consider whether the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain, constituted as it now is on more or less empirical lines, is really more efficient as political machinery than was the philosophic scheme of Indo-Aryan polity, in which the common law of the land, formulated by the chosen representatives of the people, had a religious as well as a legal sanction, and represented the highest power of the State to which even the king and his ministers must bow. It will be a surprise to many readers to discover that the Mother of the Western Parliaments had an Aryan relative in India, showing a strong family likeness, before the sixth century B.C., and that her descendants were a great power in the State at the time of the Norman Conquest.

Perhaps the most conspicuous fault of historians of India has been the inveterate habit of regarding Buddhism, Brahmanism or Hinduism, and Muhammadanism as three entirely independent camps, standing widely apart and representing irreconcilable religious ideas. In dealing with the history of Aryan rule in India it is neither necessary nor desirable to enter deeply into questions of sectarian dogma or philosophical disputes; but it is of vital importance to show as accurately as possible the relationship between different schools of religious thought and their influence upon political ideas, for there can be no *true history of India which* separates politics from religion. Into this very wide field of historical research I have endeavoured to bring forward the evidence of Indian art to correct the errors of previous writers, whose misinterpretation of it has often led their readers hopelessly astray. Even more important is it to understand the psychological standpoint upon which Indo-Aryan political science is pivoted. The great thinkers and social reformers of India, beginning with the Buddha, grasped firmly one of the eternal verities, generally ignored in Western politics, that ideas, good or evil, are more potent than armaments—for the spirit survives when

the body is destroyed. It is therefore no l
the State to purge the body politic of evil th
to stay an epidemic or provide efficient means o
self-defence. For that reason the philosophical de
halls, in which king and commoner met on terms of equali
always played a more important part in Indo-Aryan polit
than councils of war, Acts of Parliament, or royal edicts; an
for the same reason the political education of the Indian mass
in the Dark Ages of European history was probably far bett
than that which obtains in most European countries in th
twentieth century.

The breakdown of Indo-Aryan constitutional govern
under the stress of foreign aggression was more due to th
weakness of human nature than to the defects of the syste
itself—just as the virtue of the British Parliament lies in th
character and ability of its members rather than in its pecul
constitution. Similar causes produce similar effects both
India and in Europe. Indo-Aryan polity, instructed by t
Buddha and other great Aryan teachers of the military cast
was firmly based upon the principle that right is might, o
as the *Mahābhārata* puts it, that "the heavens are centr
in the ethics of the State." But it reckoned without the Hu
and the sword of Islam as wielded by Turkish war-lords
the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Mahmūd of Ghazni and
'Alā-ud-dīn. Indo-Aryan statesmen did not find that the
illiteracy of the Indian masses prevented them from taking a
considerable part in the management of their own affairs,
for before the days of the printing press and modern journalism
there were in India other means of instructing the people and
a highly organised educational system which, judging by
results, was far more efficient than the present one. Until
British statesmen divest themselves of the fatal habit o
judging Indian things by Western standards they will never
see them in the right perspective. Indo-Aryan statesmen
were not afraid of allowing the masses, including women, to
vote, on account of their illiteracy—for the most learned and
most representative Indians were often illiterate in the European

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sense: Akbar, one of the most brilliant, successful, and learne statesmen of the sixteenth century, was one of them. Britis rule has not yet profoundly affected conditions which hav their root in times long before the beginnings of Englis history.

It is not for the historian to offer a solution of moder political questions, but to provide material for the study c them. Having served an apprenticeship as a writer of India history in the study and exegesis of Indian artistic records I now venture to use them to explain and amplify the mass c literary, epigraphical, and other archaeological material whic many writers, European as well as Indian, have collected an made the basis of their historical studies. For chronologica data and statements of bare fact I can lay no claim to origina research, and must express full acknowledgment for the us of the work of my predecessors in those directions. But th treatment of the subject and interpretation of facts are for th most part my own, and they often differ materially from thos of other writers, a difference which must be ascribed to m different interpretation of the artistic record. As my inter pretation of Indian art has won the general assent of my fellow artists in Europe I cherish the hope that in the present work I may succeed in throwing new light upon the subject of Aryan rule in India. I have avoided as far as possible entering int controversies on points of purely archaeological int rest, though it has been sometimes necessary to take a definite standpoint when important historical issues are at stake. The questio of the age of the three most important works on Indo-Aryan polity, the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*, the Code of Manu, and that of Sukrāchārya, is one of them. It is generally agreed by Oriental scholars that the first relates to the time of Chandra-gupta Maurya and the second to the early centuries of the Christian era, when Buddhist ethics had deeply influenced the traditions of Brahmanism. The age of the *Sukrā-nitisāra* is a much-debated question. Many Indians ascribe to it a very great antiquity; some European scholars take it to be a comparatively modern one, *i.e.* of the twelfth or fourteenth

century A.D. Both may be right from their respective standpoints, for all three of these codes undoubtedly contain a body of traditional Aryan law and custom of very remote antiquity, which can often be recognised in the traditions of modern Indian life. On the other hand, Sukrāchārya contains references to the use of explosives and military weapons which can hardly be referred to the Mauryan epoch or earlier. I have therefore taken the *Sukrā-nitisāra* as generally descriptive of Indo-Aryan society in the early Middle Ages, but have not hesitated to quote it as an authority on Indo-Aryan constitutional law and custom in previous times, when it seems only to explain or amplify parallel sections in Kautilīya's and Manu's codes. Similarly I have sometimes assumed Manu's laws to have been recognised in very early Aryan times, though the compilation itself belongs to a later period. When the philological evidence is obscure the historian is bound to rely on *sruti* rather than *smriti*. For the history of the Muhammadan conquest I have mostly used the material so abundantly provided by Muhammadan historians, only checking their accounts with the artistic evidence so as to remove the sectarian gloss which has falsified the interpretation of historical facts in exactly the same way as official German reports falsify the facts of modern history. The great development of Islamic culture in India is thus shown in its true aspect as a distinct branch of the Indo-Aryan tree, and not, as Fergusson and his followers have made it, a manifestation of inborn 'Turanian' spirituality distinguishing Muhammadan 'culture' from Hindu 'barbarism.'

E. B. H.

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From the Annual Report of the Indian Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle, 1908–9, by kind permission of H.M. Secretary of State for India in Council.

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elaboration of the Vishnu type of temple (Plate 13), characteristic of the Gupta period and of North Indian temple architecture generally. The contemporary temple of Tanjore (Plate 19) shows the typical Siva temple, derived from the ancient stūpa, which is most characteristic of Southern India, where the Saiva cult is predominant. To a Saiva worshipper there is no inconsistency in placing a Siva image in a Vishnu shrine, for Siva to him is Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva—the Three in One.

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The attachment of Bāz Bahādur to the Hindu songstress was a favourite subject with Indian painters. In this picture the pair are seen riding by night among the hills of Rājputāna, a torch-bearer in front lighting up the path. From an eighteenth-century Indian painting in the Calcutta Government Art Gallery.

27. TIMŪR ENTHRONED, ATTENDED BY TRIBUTARY CHIEFTAINS 370

From a Persian manuscript of the sixteenth century in the India Office Library (MS. 137, folio 71 verso), by kind permission of H.M. Secretary of State for India in Council.

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The picture is entitled in the original "The Seating on the Throne of the Lord of the Conjunction after the killing of the Amīr Husain," and represents Timūr receiving the homage of tributaries after his accession. It is no doubt the work of one of the Mogul court painters, possibly of Bābur's or Humāyūn's time, but more probably Akbar's.

28. (1) TOMB OF IBRĀHĪM 'ADIL SHAH II AT BIJĀPŪR. (2) TOMB OF MUHAMMAD 'ADIL SHAH AT BIJĀPŪR 394

Two typical examples of Bijāpūr architecture. The great dome of Muhammad's tomb is larger than the Pantheon at Rome, and is a triumph of the Indian master-builder's engineering skill. By an ingenious arrangement of pendentives, arranged in the form of a lotus, the huge weight of the dome is balanced within the interior of the building, instead of being thrown against heavy external buttresses according to the more clumsy Roman system.

29. THE 'ELEPHANT STABLES,' VIJAYANAGAR 406

It is highly improbable that this building was originally designed for elephant stables. It is much more likely to have been the mosque built by Rāmrāj for his Muhammadan bodyguard. Though the orientation is not strictly orthodox, in other respects it closely resembles the design of a mosque.

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The destruction of a tower, caused by the explosion of a mine during the siege by Akbar in 1567. From the *Akbar-nāma* Series in the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, by kind permission of the Director and Secretary. The picture is a double one and the reproduction shows one half of it. The artists' names are Muskina (outline), Thura (colour).

33. (1) THE JĀMI' MASJID, FATEHPUR-SIKRI. (2) THE DAFTAR KHĀNA, FATEHPUR-SIKRI 470

Akbar's royal mosque and his Record Office. See pp. 470 and 476–477. A full description of the buildings at Fatehpur-Sikri is given in the author's *Handbook to Agra and the Tāj* (Longmans).

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CORRIGENDA

At pp. 116, 117, and 182 *garbha-griha* has been misprinted *garbha-grihya*.

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PART I

ĀRYĀVARTA BEFORE THE MUHAMMADAN CONQUEST

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CHAPTER I

ARYANS AND NON-ARYANS IN VEDIC INDIA

INDIA, whether regarded from a physical or intellectual standpoint, is herself the great exemplar of the doctrine of the One in Many which her philosophers proclaimed to the world. Though singularly varied both in climate and geographical character, there is one great force which regulates the rainfall and helps to fertilise the soil—the magnetic attraction of the tremendous mountain barriers which separate her from the main continent of Asia and hold up the onrush of the monsoon clouds. Always containing amongst her population an immense variety of racial elements, from the highest grade of civilisation to the lowest, there was from the earliest recorded times one dominant race whose religious theory and political institutions consolidated the loosely cohering particles of the State and made Indian history. From the time of Alexander's raid until the beginning of British rule India was always politically a self-contained state, in so far that no successful invader, once he had established a dynasty there, ever dreamt of extending his conquests further than her most northern boundaries, or beyond the ocean which surrounds her eastern and western shores. And in the domain of thought, though India has been more prolific in schools of philosophy and religion than any other country in the world, there runs through them all a vein of perception or insight which differentiates them from the characteristic bent of Western intellect and makes them distinctively Indian. Religion in the West is the light given from above which illuminates the path of life, but yet remains, for most men and women, remote from life itself. In India philosophy and

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religion have always been regarded as the essence of all sciences, and the mainspring of all the forces which control life in every aspect.

The Aryan people who gradually imposed their civilisation upon the whole of India were closely related to that masterful race which in the first or second millennium before Christ began to dominate the shores and islands of the Mediterranean and the Euxine, whose intellectual power gained a supremacy in Europe not less than that won by their fellow-Aryans in India. But so far as the scanty evidence of early Vedic literature goes, the first Aryan invaders of India were pastoral and agricultural rather than seafaring folk, and their entry into India was chiefly through the north-western gateways of the Himālayan mountain wall. There is, indeed, every probability that some of the early Indo-Aryan settlements in the Panjab came by sea, through the Persian Gulf and up the Indus—the route by which part of Alexander's expedition returned to Babylon; for it is now known that Babylon was ruled by an Aryan dynasty for about six hundred years, and there is no doubt that the great cities of Mesopotamia were always in close commercial intercourse with India.

Modern archaeological research has thrown much light upon the history of the Aryans in Western Asia. In the second millennium B.C., or when the Aryans were pushing their way into Northern India, the Mitannians, an Aryan people worshipping the nature-spirits of the Vedas, Sūrya, Varuna, and Indra, had founded a powerful kingdom between the Tigris and Euphrates, and the old Vedic tradition of the conflicts between the Devas and the Asuras can perhaps be referred to the struggles between the Aryan worshippers of Sūrya and the Semites of Assyria, who became subject to the kings of Mitanni. About 1746 B.C. the Kassites, another branch of the Aryans, made themselves masters of Babylon, and thus an Aryan dynasty ruled over Babylonia for the following six hundred years. During these centuries it is more than probable that the Aryans of Mesopotamia assisted in the colonisation of the

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Panjab, making use of the sea-route between India and the Euphrates valley by which the Sumerians, the ancient Dravidian inhabitants of the Sea-Land to the south of Babylon, must have come from India. A great impulse to Aryan immigration into the Panjab by sea probably came about 1367 B.C., when after the death of King Dushratta—a name familiar in ancient Indian literature by the story of the *Rāmāyana*—Mitanni was thrown into a state of anarchy, being harried on the east by the Assyrians and on the west by the Hittites, so that the only way of escape for the vanquished Aryan warriors would have been down the river to the sea.

The theory that the Aryans, when first known to history, were semi-barbaric tribes who borrowed their civilisation from the more cultured races they conquered, both in India and in Europe, seems to be formed upon a wrong judgment of the archaeological evidence. The Vedas—the bedrock of Indo-Aryan civilisation—are not the literature of an uncultured people, and they certainly are, on the whole, Aryan and not borrowed from Dravidian or other sources. They represent the culture of a race of warrior-poets and philosophers who despised the arts of commerce and lived mostly by agriculture, with one hand on the sword and the other on the plough. They built no temples, but worshipped nature-spirits with simple sacrificial rites which would leave little traces behind them for archaeological explorers to analyse. The Aegean, Babylonian, and Dravidian cultures which they added to their own stock and re-inspired with their own genius were essentially mercantile civilisations with a more limited spiritual outlook than the Aryan, though in the nature of things they would leave more material evidence of their existence for posterity, for they were more concerned with the happiness which lies in material possessions than in spiritual thoughts and the endeavour to realise the high destiny of the human race.

The Indo-Aryan classification of society into four categories—intellectuals, militarists, merchants, and labourers—was not merely a description of local conditions in Āryāvarta but a

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general one indicative of the four grades of culture which are co-ordinated in the progress of civilisation. It was the noblest characteristic of Indo-Aryan polity that it was always based upon a just appreciation of the respective values of these four powers governing the destiny of mankind. Though undue preference might sometimes be given to Aryan intellect, racial and social prejudices were never so strong that the great thinkers of alien stock did not receive due honour. It was only when Aryan civilisation was decadent that caste, as it is now understood, became a hindrance to intellectual progress. Neither the victories of brute force nor the seductions of material prosperity are found dominating the pages of Indo-Aryan history. The search for knowledge was a religious quest which absorbed the highest energies of the Aryan State. Those who contributed most to the happiness and progress of mankind—the inspired religious teacher, the wisemen of every class, and all who have loved and helped their fellow-beings—were those whom India has honoured and cherished in her memory.

It is a profound misunderstanding of history to maintain that the Aryan genius was inartistic and that Aryan civilisation was a borrowed one. The Aryans, as all poets and artists do, borrowed their material where they could find it; but it was their own creative genius which gave the matter new and higher forms and inspired it with deeper thoughts. And because of their artistic genius and power of adapting themselves to their environment, Aryan civilisation in Greece, Persia, and India, despite its common origin, had an individuality of its own—borrowed perhaps in the sense that a plant borrows nutriment from the soil in which it grows. In each case also the Aryan stock, on account of its adaptability to its environment, was crossed with indigenous plants of a lower order, and according to a natural law evolved a higher state of culture from the union; but it is not for the historian to determine whether the Potter or the pot should be given the greater credit for the result.

Aryan civilisation in India was not a reflex or a by-current

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of that which had its origin in Southern Europe. It was India herself who moulded it in her own image, directed its endeavours and inspired its ideals. And the local environment which gave Indo-Aryan thought its special character and coloured its whole outlook upon life was the north-western region of the Himālayas and the valleys of the great rivers which have their sources there. That was, and is still, India's holy land. However remote from it their migrations went, the Aryans carried with them the legends of their Himālayan home. The names of the Vedic nature-gods brought into India by the first Aryan invaders—Sūrya, Agni, Mitra, Varuna, and others—are vague memories of the past, but every Hindu temple, ancient or modern, perpetuates the early Aryan veneration for Siva, the blue-necked, snow-crowned mountain; for Pārvatī the Spring-maiden, Himālaya's fair daughter, Siva's bride; for Meru, Vishnu's sacred mountain, the pivot of the universe; and for Lakshmi, the breaking of day over the Himālayan peaks. And not only are the Himālayan sacred shrines still the cherished goal of the pilgrim and the centre of popular Hindu worship, but even the intellectual Brahman uses these names for symbols of cosmic forces and for the concepts of his philosophy.

The description of the old English village communities in Sleswick and Jutland given by a well-known historian,[1] and the characteristics ascribed to the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxon race, correspond closely with what is known of the early Aryan settlements in India from their literary records and from traditional evidence. The Indo-Aryan resembled the Anglo-Saxon in his detestation of the restraints of city life and his love for the independence which agriculture and the organisation of village communities gave him. "Each little farmer-commonwealth was girt in by its own border or 'mark,' a belt of forest or waste or fen which parted it from its fellow villages, a ring of common ground which none of its settlers might take for his own, but which sometimes served as a death-ground where criminals met their doom and was held

[1] J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People*, pp. 3–4.

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to be the special dwelling-place of the nixie and the will-o'-the-wisp. . . . Inside this boundary the 'township,' as the village was then called, from the 'tun' or rough fence and trench that served as its simple fortification, formed a ready-made fortress in war, while in peace its entrenchments were serviceable in the feuds of village with village or house with house. . . . The holdings of the freemen clustered round a moot-hill or sacred tree where the community met from time to time to order its own industry and to frame its own laws. Here plough-land and meadow-land were shared in due lot among the villagers, and field and homestead passed from man to man. Here strife of farmer with farmer was settled according to the 'customs' of the township as its 'elder men' stated them, and the wrong-doer was judged and his fine assessed by the kinsfolk; and here men were chosen to follow headman or ealdorman to hundred court or war."[1]

The Anglo-Saxon 'ceorls' corresponded with the Indo-Aryan Kshatriyas, the fighting men of the clan, who in early times took precedence over the priests, or Brahmans, and were the spiritual leaders of the people. The name *varna*, or colour, which was the Vedic word for social grade or caste, seems to imply that the blood-bond which "gave both its military and social form to Old English society" was also the ruling principle in the early Indo-Aryan social system, though afterwards the idea of ritualistic purity grew into and eventually superseded it.

The parallel ceases abruptly when chronological coincidences are sought for. Indo-Aryan civilisation is one of the oldest in the world; the Anglo-Saxon one of the most recent. When Hengist and Horsa with their semi-civilised followers landed on the Isle of Thanet in the fifth century A.D., the Indo-Aryan tradition already went back for thousands of years; and the first Aryan invaders were not less venerated by the Indian people who came within the Aryan pale than were the gods of the old Norse mythology by our Anglo-Saxon fore-fathers. Indo-Aryan civilisation was a structure of venerable

[1] Green, *loc. cit.*

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antiquity before the corner-stones of the British Empire had been well and truly laid.

There is another distinction, not less marked, between the early period of Indo-Aryan history and that of the English nation. The Jutes, Angles, and other Northern tribes which helped to form the English stock won their footing on British soil solely by their superior organisation and fighting qualities and not by force of intellect. In civilisation they were often on a far lower level than the people they overcame. But the primitive religion of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors took no root in Britain, and when the barbarian sword was sheathed the culture of Athens and Rome began to assert its spiritual supremacy over the whole of Western Europe; and this culture at that time derived its highest inspiration from Asia.

The Aryan conquest of India, on the other hand, was no war of extermination, fierce and bitter though the struggle may have been at the beginning. The pioneers of Indo-Aryan civilisation, like their fellow-Aryans in Southern Europe, won their way even more effectually by their superior intellectual qualities than by their fighting strength. Though for many centuries holding themselves proudly aloof from the non-Aryan races and jealously guarding their spiritual inheritance from profanation by the uninitiated, their laws, political institutions, and religious ideas gradually became, for the vast majority of the people, the warp and weft of Indian life, even for the millions in whose veins no trace of Aryan blood can now be found.

The student of Indian history must not, however, make generalisations of this kind go too far. It is probable that the Aryans were always numerically a very minute fraction of the people of India; and even among those who called themselves Aryan there were many of mixed blood. It was by spiritual rather than physical ties that Aryans and non-Aryans were gradually bound together into a political unity with an abiding sense of nationality. In a very considerable proportion the non-Aryans retained their vernacular languages and their social customs. The Dravidians, and doubtless other

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non-Aryans, had a settled village system before the Aryans entered India which was not entirely superseded but rather linked on to the Aryan system; for it was a fixed principle of Aryan government that the social customs and proprietary laws of conquered people should always be respected. Thus the primitive non-Aryan village system continued to exist side by side with the Aryan, and long survived the break-up of Aryan political organisation. But the fact that at the present time possibly two-thirds of Indian villages belong to a non-Aryan, or what is now known as the *raiyatwāri* revenue system, does not show that Aryan civilisation never affected more than one-third of the Indian population. It merely indicates that when Aryan law and organisation relaxed their hold upon Indian society its Dravidian or non-Aryan substratum was unable to resist the disintegrating power of alien ideas introduced by the new Aryan rulers of India when they were groping blindly in the darkness of India's unknown history.

The historian who deals with a vast country like India must inevitably indulge in generalisations which will seem misleading if applied to particular provinces or to any one of the numerous races which at one time or another came within the Aryan pale. A true history of India must be a synthesis rather than an analysis. It is therefore superfluous to attempt to describe in detail the peculiarities of non-Aryan village systems, but it is necessary to indicate briefly the broad distinctions between them and the Aryan. The Aryan system was a scientific organisation based upon sanitary laws and inspired by high ethical and social ideals. It was a scheme of communal village life, worked out by the practical philosophy of one of the most highly gifted of the races of mankind, in which each section of the community and each individual member of it took their allotted shares of work for the common weal, not under the compulsion of an autocrat or of a ruling caste, but by a clear perception of mutual advantage and a voluntary recognition of superior intellectual leadership.

The non-Aryan were empirical systems of a primitive agri-

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cultural type, such as are found in many countries. These primitive village communities were loosely knit together by tribal customs and motives of self-interest, but they possessed but little capacity for self-improvement so long as they remained outside Aryan influence and guidance. The history of Aryan village life is contained in Indo-Aryan sacred literature; its traditional organisation is preserved in the canonical books of the Indian craftsman and in the planning of Indian temples and towns. The Aryan village was the basis of Indo-Aryan polity, and its history is the real history of India. The non-Aryan village system has survived and served as the foundations of the Anglo-Indian land revenue system, but before it was developed under Aryan inspiration it had no recorded history, literature, or art, and its part in the evolution of Indian civilisation had been almost a negligible factor.

Of all the non-Aryan races which inhabited India before the Aryan immigration it has been assumed, with good reason, that the most civilised were the Dravidians, and we can gather from the study of primitive Dravidian sociology in aboriginal Indian tribes of the present day what part Dravidian institutions took in the formation of the Indo-Aryan village system. The indigenous Dravidian system was in all probability the foundation upon which the Indo-Aryan economic superstructure was built. The Dravidian tribesmen were generally nomad hunters living in the forest, and their social system differed from the Aryan in being matriarchal instead of patriarchal. The mothers and their children formed the nucleus of a settled society; the fathers were the hunters of a different tribe whose occupation of supplying food for the common meals kept them often away from the village. The men and women of the same village had separate quarters. All the tribal social customs, including marriage, were on a communal basis—the children were the offspring of the intercourse which took place when the young men and women of different tribes met and danced together in the forest glades at the festivals of the seasons. In the more settled communities the Dravidian mothers added to the common food supplies

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by collecting edible roots and forest produce which could be found near the village, and began a regular system of cultivation in the perfection of which they were helped, according to tradition, by the friendly teaching of Aryan *rishis* who had retired to the peaceful seclusion of the forest for meditation. The agricultural lands of which the Dravidian tribes thus became possessed were also communal property, held in turns by different groups of cultivators according to the redistribution made periodically at the village meetings.

The respective duties of the mothers and of the able-bodied men in this ancient communal system were thus well defined. The fathers had little concern with the affairs of their own children—all the men and women of the same tribe were as brothers and sisters. It is easy to understand how all the inborn religious instincts of the people became centred in the mother rather than in the father of the family, who did not live in the village and often was unknown to the children. They could never realise the conception of the Fatherhood of God: the Earth-Mother who in times of distress would demand a child-victim from her worshippers embodied all their ideas of the divine. India was their mother, not their father.

The elder men of the village, past efficient work as hunters, also had their share in the communal life. When the children were old enough they took charge of their education, teaching them all the lore of the forest, the habits of its wild denizens, the use of the weapons of the chase, and the traditional laws and customs of the tribe. The village grove where the children were taught, and where the elders discussed the affairs of the community, became the school, the parliament house, and the temple of the tribe.

This Arcadian scheme of life, delightful in its primitive simplicity and progressive up to a certain point, had one fatal defect—that while it helped to bring all the inhabitants of a village up to the tribal standard of efficiency, it also tended to suppress any exceptional personal aptitudes and individual efforts at improvement. It produced a kind of socialistic despotism, not unknown in our own times, as tyrannical in

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its own way as autocracy. Any member of the tribe possessed of more than average ability who dared to question the authority of tribal customs risked the punishment of immediate death or the possibly worse penalty of being expelled from the tribe. But rebels and reformers there were in those days as in this, and those adventurous spirits who escaped the anger of their fellow-tribesmen and the perils of the untracked jungle would band themselves together as outlaws, preying upon the more peaceful tribes and, when occasion offered, carrying off their women to their hill-forts, where Dūrgā, the Inaccessible, the Terrible, was worshipped as the Mother with bloody sacrifices.

It was amongst these bandit tribal offshoots, rather than the original Dravidian stock with communal customs, that the ideas of kingship, monogamous marriage, and individual ownership of property developed. A successful leader would naturally command more authority among them than he would in the more conservative and less aggressive society. A wife taken by force would remain the property of the captor, and cultivated land or other spoil won in plundering raids would be divided amongst the raiders. At the same time, the potentialities of a higher development of culture were often greater in this predatory state of society than they were in the other, for it always attracted the more intelligent and enterprising members of the village communities. In its lowest stage it produced the ferocious forest bandits regarded by the Aryans with horror and disgust as *rākshasas*, or demons, and it culminated in the powerful Dravidian kingdoms which the Aryans gradually subdued by superior arms and superior intellect. But in all grades of Dravidian civilisation the primeval matriarchal principle remained as the basis of the law of inheritance and the foundation of religious beliefs.

Such, no doubt, were some of the varied conditions of Dravidian society when the first Aryan tribesmen, eating meat and drinking an intoxicating liquor made from soma juice—originally a fair-skinned hardy race of mountaineers—descended into the plains of India, perhaps many centuries before they

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succeeded in founding a dynasty in the Euphrates valley, but not before they had developed a highly organised military system and were well advanced in the science of agriculture. They were cheerful, freedom-loving folk, full of the joy of life, singing songs to the good spirits who guarded their homesteads and cattle and aided them in winning the fruits of the earth—songs which had a magic power to bless the daily toil in field or workshop and gave them a kindly feeling towards their neighbours, Aryan and non-Aryan, in times of peace. But when, summoned to war by their chieftains or roused to defend the homes and land they loved, they yoked their horses to their fighting cars, strung their bows and took up sword and spear, they were fierce and relentless enemies, going into battle inflamed by heavy draughts of soma juice, led by their bards shouting the tribal war-songs, and preferring death to dishonour of the Aryan name.

Early Indo-Aryan society was, like that of the Homeric age in Greece, a patriarchal system in which the father instead of the mother was the head of the joint family, and the warrior, instead of the hunter or bandit, was the leader of the tribe. But war was not the only or chief occupation of the Aryan tribesmen. Cattle-farming and agriculture were their principal means of sustenance; predatory warfare was incidental to inevitable tribal quarrels, but not the sole end of existence.

The Aryans were a far more cultured race, but their organisation resembled in some respects that of the Dravidian robber tribes. The Aryan patriarchal joint-families were grouped round the chieftain's hill-fort, which was the centre for mutual defence, for the common tribal sacrifices, and the meeting-place of the *Sabhā*—the assembly of the householders. There appears to have been no recognition of communal rights either in agricultural land or in live stock, but only in the common pastures to which the chief herdsman daily drove their cattle.

The first Aryan settlers were constantly being pushed further south and east by the steady influx of others of the same race, some of whom in the course of centuries brought the experience of city life and of agriculture in the plains of

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Mesopotamia. Aryan culture was thus gradually differentiated from non-Aryan not only by greater proficiency in the arts of peace and war, but also by the richness and variety of its agricultural resources, for the Aryans brought the millets, barley, wheat, and oil-seeds of Mesopotamia and Asia Minor to supplement the indigenous rice-crops of the non-Aryan agriculturists in the plains of India.

As to when this Aryan immigration into India first began and when it ceased authorities differ very widely. But whether it commenced 5000 or 3000 years before Christ this much is certain, that in the course of centuries a process of assimilation went on by which eventually the Indo-Aryan village system was evolved, having for its foundation the communal principle of the primitive Dravidian foreign settlement and for its superstructure the higher culture and organisation created by Aryan genius and dominated by Aryan spiritual ideals. The matriarchal system and the rudimentary culture of the Dravidian village both retained places in the scheme of Indo-Aryan civilisation. Dravidian kings were proud to claim descent, on their mothers' side, from ancient Aryan dynasties. Aryan forest hermits taught useful arts and higher spiritual truths in Dravidian village schools, so that the cruel Earth-Mother came to be the bride of the Aryan Sun-god and the bringer of prosperity; while the dread Dūrgā—the religious cult of the brigand and outlaw—was transformed into the beauteous wife of the Great Ascetic, Siva, the teacher of spiritual wisdom and the destroyer of ignorance. Popular legends of Krishna, the dark-skinned Indo-Aryan hero, *guru* of the Pāndavas, were interwoven with the folk-lore of Dravidian village life, and he became the Protector of the people from tyranny and wrong, the divine Cowherd who danced with the village maidens at the spring festival and taught the love of God for man. By such teaching the higher spiritual intelligence of the Aryan with its great constructive genius gradually welded together Dravidian civilisation with its own, so that each contributed its best to the common stock and both went hand in hand along the path of progress.

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ARYAN RULE IN INDIA

The great problem for Aryan thinkers, after their fighting men had secured their position in India by the sword, was to prevent their race, and with it the divine revelation of which they believed themselves to be the heirs, from being utterly submerged in the process of adaptation to their environment, which was the inevitable consequence of a permanent occupation of the country. This instinct of race preservation, together with a profound conviction of divine guidance, formed the basic principles of the code of laws and social customs which became a part of the sacred literature of Hinduism. The term Aryan, originally a purely racial distinction confined to the 'five peoples,' or five principal Aryan tribes, came to mean all the people who were within the Aryan pale and conformed to Aryan laws and institutions. The five social grades, partly based upon race and partly upon occupation, were the four recognised varnas, known as the 'pure classes'—the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sūdras—and a fifth which included the offspring of intermarriages which were not recognised by Aryan law. The Brahmans formed the priestly class; the Kshatriyas were the fighting men; the Vaisyas the common people engaged in occupations connected with the necessaries of life; and the Sūdras the menial labourers, including the lower ranks of handicraftsmen and tillers of the soil. Outside the Aryan pale, and never admitted therein, were the wild aboriginal tribes inhabiting the dense forests, who then, as now, held themselves aloof from civilised life.

The idea of purity which made the social distinctions amongst the Aryans themselves and between Aryans and non-Aryans was probably in its origin identical with the blood-bond of the Teutonic races. But with the gradual development of the Vedic theory of sacrifice it came to be interpreted in a spiritual rather than physical sense, and thus denoted the barrier which separated those who could participate in the benefits of Vedic ritual, either directly or by proxy, from the 'impure,' whose mere presence would entirely vitiate the efficacy of the sacrifice.

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But the rigidity and exclusiveness of the caste system, as we now know it, were largely the product of medieval conditions and did not exist either in the time of the Buddha or for many centuries afterwards. Neither is it right to suppose that the rigour of caste was imposed upon India by the craft and subtlety of an unscrupulous priesthood only bent upon self-aggrandisement. It was rather an inevitable consequence of the peculiar conditions and circumstances which produced Aryan civilisation in India. If it be assumed that a certain race, few in numbers and surrounded by a vast population of aliens, had by profound insight or by divine revelation obtained a knowledge of the laws of life far above that of their fellow-men, it would obviously be for the advantage of the community at large that the purity of the race should be maintained by strict marriage laws and that the utmost care should be taken to hand down to posterity a tradition so pregnant with human happiness. The Aryans believed themselves to be in possession of this precious knowledge, and lest it should be perverted or made a weapon in the hands of unscrupulous adversaries, by common consent it was guarded as a national palladium and entrusted to the custody of a class specially selected and trained for the purpose. Caste laws were laws of spiritual eugenics, designed to promote the evolution of a higher race. It was also by a process of natural selection, or survival of the fittest, that the Brahmans, originally only attendants at the tribal sacrifices who chanted the accompanying hymns and had charge of the sacred vessels, gradually obtained precedence over the Kshatriyas, who in Vedic times combined priestly functions with their military profession and were the representatives of the purest Aryan stock. For in the state of constant warfare which existed so long as the Aryans and their non-Aryan allies were fighting for supremacy in India, social and racial prejudices would often be subordinated to considerations of national security, and the blood of the Kshatriya aristocracy would tend to become mixed by the admission into their ranks of non-Aryans and men of mixed race who distinguished themselves as leaders

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in war but were not competent to officiate in sacrificial rites.

The increasing complication of these rites and the supposed dangers to the Aryan community which might arise from errors in their performance also made it imperative that none but highly trained experts should be allowed to take part in them. And not only was the Brahman class by reason of its occupation less liable to mixture with non-Aryan blood, but the intellectual training which alone entitled the Brahmans to their especial privileges was intended to qualify them as teachers and spiritual leaders of the people. The Brahman at birth stood on the level of common humanity, even as a Sūdra. It was only at the ceremony of investiture with the sacred thread and initiation into the state of *Brahmacharin* or studentship, when his spiritual father, the Brahman guru, whispered in his ear the mystic formula, the *Gayatri*, which contained the essence of all the Vedas, that he was born to Brahmanhood and was entitled to the exceptional privileges of his class. "As an elephant made of wood, as an antelope made of leather, such is an unlearned Brahman: those three have nothing but names" (*Manu*, ii, 157).

However extravagant the claims of the Brahmans may have become in later times, it must be admitted that the moral standard prescribed in the rules of their order was a very high one. "A Brahman should constantly shun worldly honour as he would shun poison; and rather constantly seek disrespect as we would seek nectar" (*Manu*, ii, 162). He was required to live abstemiously, to shun sensual excesses of every kind, and to observe very strict rules of personal hygiene. As a student, or *Brahmacharin*, in the first quarter of his life he must learn to control his passions, to wait sedulously on his preceptor, or guru, and beg for his daily food. As a householder he must avoid all kinds of wealth that might impede his constant study of the Vedas, speak the truth without needless altercation, keep himself pure in mind and body, and live with the least possible injury to all animated beings (*Manu*, iv). In old age, provided that he had no relations dependent upon

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him, he should renounce the worldly life entirely and retire to a forest hermitage for meditation or become a wandering mendicant (*sannyāsin*). The Brahman who neglected the rules of his order or those who committed sin under the pretext of austere devotion were, among their own class, to be despised both in this life and the next (*Manu*, iv, 199). Those who took to occupations other than those permitted by the rules of their order lost their status as Brahmans and in the civil courts were to be treated as Sūdras (*Manu*, viii, 102). But, lest such discriminations should lower the prestige of the whole order, justice was not permitted to go further than this, and Brahmans were to be honoured as such by the other classes even though they descended to mean occupations, and whether they were learned or ignorant (*Manu*, ix, 317–319).

The marriage laws, the strict rules of seclusion, and the severe penalties for injuries caused to Brahmans by anyone of the lower orders were, in the social conditions which obtained in India, a necessary protection for those who were the especial custodians of the honour and traditions of the Aryan race, and who by the nature of their calling did not usually bear arms for self-defence. It must be observed, however, that the position given to Brahmans in the laws of Manu must not be taken to represent that which they held in primitive Indo-Aryan society, but rather that which they had earned for themselves in the early centuries of the Christian era, when this code was probably drawn up. Neither should it be supposed that the laws were always strictly observed: they represent rather a counsel of perfection given by Brahmans for the government of a model Indo-Aryan state.

The Rāmāyana records the fact that some of the higher ranks of craftsmen had a social status equal to that of Brahmans. Included among them were those who were versed in the canons of craft ritual, the *Silpa-Sāstras*, such as the craftsmen who wrought the sacrificial posts at tribal religious ceremonies and the master-builders who laid out the plans of the village communities and designed public buildings and irrigation works. But it was only when a craftsman was regarded as

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officiating in sacred rites that he took the status of a Brahman and was entitled to the privileges of the highest class. "The hand of an artist employed in his art is always pure" (*Manu*, v, 129), but those who built houses for gain were to be avoided as offenders against Aryan law, contact with whom was pollution (*Manu*, iii, 163).

It has been assumed by Fergusson and other archaeological writers, on very insufficient grounds, that the Aryans when they entered India had not emerged from a primitive state of culture, that they were little skilled in handicraft, and that Indian architecture was largely a creation of the non-Aryan races with whom they came in contact. If, as is more than probable, some of the Aryan immigrants were an overflow from the great cities of Mesopotamia and Persia, there is no reason to suppose that they were unskilled in the arts of city life. The building craft has always been closely associated with the science of warfare, and the Aryan fighting clans would hardly have prevailed in the long struggle against the warlike non-Aryan races in India had they not been at least as well equipped in the means of offence and defence as their adversaries. Indeed every conquest of India has been a story of the superior technical equipment of the invading armies.

The Kshatriyas, as well as the Vaisyas, were entitled to the sacred thread and were initiated at the proper age as members of the 'twice-born' classes. Their special duties were the protection of the whole community and the administration of justice, but they never renounced their claim to be considered, equally with Brahmans, the spiritual leaders of the people. As philosophers and poets they contributed a great deal to Aryan sacred literature, especially to the earliest. The Buddha was one of the great spiritual teachers who belonged to the Kshatriya class and represented its religious ideals. In warfare they were bound by rules of chivalry which always distinguish civilisation from barbarism. It was held unworthy of a Kshatriya to use arrows "mischievously barbed," or poisoned darts blazing with fire, or concealed weapons. They were forbidden to kill non-combatants, or an enemy when

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sleeping, grievously wounded, or disarmed; or one who was naked, had broken weapons, or had lost his armour. As a king, or chief of his tribe, either by election or hereditary right, the duty of a Kshatriya was to consult his council of ministers in all matters of importance and to rule in strict accordance with Aryan common law. The rights of the people were to be respected to such an extent that even a conquered nation was to be ruled according to the laws declared in their books, and not after the caprice of the conqueror (*Manu*, vii, 203). Punishment for offences was to be awarded in an ascending scale according to the social rank of the criminal. Thus, according to the laws of Manu (viii, 336–338), the fine of a Sūdra for theft was to be eightfold; that of a Vaisya sixteen-fold; that of a Kshatriya thirty-two-fold; and that of a Brahman sixty-four-fold. And where a man of lower rank would be fined one *pana* a king was to be fined a thousand.

The Vaisya class, which included agriculturists, traders, and handicraftsmen, was not bound by such strict rules of morality as the two upper classes, since trafficking and usury were *satyānrita*, or a mixture of truth and falsehood (*Manu*, iv, 6). Yet this ancient code of Aryan ethics declares that "of all pure things, purity in acquiring wealth is pronounced the most excellent; since he who gains wealth with clean hands is truly pure, not he who is purified merely with earth and water" (*Manu*, v, 106). If this principle were accepted as the foundation of modern economic science we might find in it the key to the solution of many vital industrial problems. The position accorded to Vaisyas as one of the 'twice-born' classes seems to show that even in Vedic times the trading community was an influential one among the Aryans in India. There is evidence that commercial intercourse both by land and sea existed between the Aryan colonies in Northern India and the rich Dravidian kingdoms of the South from very early times. Aryan merchants doubtless also took part in the ancient trade between India and Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and the great cities of Western Asia. And no doubt it was owing to this constant intercourse with

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foreign peoples that Aryan blood in the Vaisya class, in spite of marriage laws, tended to become very mixed.

The Sūdras, the lowest of the four classes recognised as 'pure,' or Aryan, occupied the position of serfs. They were not permitted to wear the sacred thread, the symbol of a second, or spiritual, birth, and their highest duty, says Manu, was the service of Brahmans, with the expectation that if faithfully performed it might win for them Brahmanhood in the next birth. They were never permitted to study the sacred scriptures or to perform the rites of the twice-born classes on the ground that they could not by reason of their calling attain to that degree of purity of mind and living which were essential for the right use of the power gained by divine knowledge. Yet, it was said, wisdom might be learnt even from a Sūdra, just as gold might be extracted from impure substances or nectar from poison (*Manu*, ii, 238–239).

Outside the four varnas, but yet admitted within the Aryan pale, was a fifth class called *Sāmānya*, or Common, otherwise *Sūtas*, which was formed by irregular intermarriages between the other classes or between Aryans and non-Aryans. This, the original basis of the caste system, was constantly being widened by the admission of non-Aryan people within the pale, who though adopting the principles of Aryan law and religion, yet did not wholly abandon their own social customs and popular deities.

The political organisation of the Aryan tribes was a democracy based upon the organisation of the village community, a number of villages being generally federated for purposes of mutual protection under the rule of a *rāja*, or king, sometimes elected and sometimes hereditary, who though vested with supreme authority was subject to Aryan common law and tradition. The planning of the village and the religious symbolism connected with it are recorded in the Silpa-Sāstras, and were reproduced in the enclosure of the Hindu temple of medieval and modern times. The typical form, probably derived from the fortified camp of the first Aryan invaders, was a rectangular enclosure with the four sides facing the

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four quarters, and divided into four wards by the two main streets which crossed each other in the centre and were terminated at each end by the four principal gates. There were four subsidiary gates near the corners of the village enclosure, so that the whole circumference of the walls or palisade was divided into eight—' the Eightfold Path.' The longest of the two main streets, which ran east and west, was known as the King's Street—*Rājapatha*; the shorter one was called *Mahākala* or *Vamana*, signifying Broad Street or Short Street. These two streets, wider than the rest and planted with trees, were the two main lines of communication linking village with village and forming the highways of commerce. They were military and commercial routes maintained either at the charge of the king's treasury or by the co-operation of groups of villages and at their joint expense. The centre of the village, at the intersection of the crossways, was the meeting-place of the elders, and there, on a mound faced with stone or brick which served as a platform, grew the Council Tree—the *Bodhi* Tree or Tree of Wisdom—under the shade of which the affairs of the village were discussed. In the larger villages a more substantial Council House might be found in the form of a pillared pavilion built of wood, brick, or stone, attached to the shrine of the patron deity of the community, which was open on all four sides to symbolise his guardianship of the four quarters. This was the position assigned in the Silpa-Sāstras to the temple of Brahmā as Creator and Protector of the Universe. To express his attributes of world-dominion and his guardianship of the crossways he was popularly represented as having four heads, though Aryan religious teachers discountenanced the ritualistic use of images.

Just as the aim of Vedic philosophy was to discover the secret laws of the universe and to found thereon a religion of everyday life, so the Indo-Aryan village was conceived as a microcosm, the ' five peoples ' of the Aryan community representing the five elements of the universe and each quarter of the village symbolising a corresponding division of the macrocosm. The public celebration of the sacrificial rites to the

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deities (*devas*) who presided over the different quarters of the universe had its appointed place in the quarters of the village dedicated to these deities, and thus each temple had its appropriate site fixed according to the aspect of the divine power which was to be worshipped. The houses of the villagers—which were the family property of the freemen, but could not be alienated without the consent of the community—the public bathing-places, parks or sacred groves, and public orchards were grouped round these fixed points in various ways, according to the nature of the site and the social rank of the owners. The bazars occupied the blocks adjoining the village enclosure, close to the main gates.

A wide path which intervened between the outer blocks and the boundary walls, or fences, was known as the *Mangala-vīthi*, the path of Blessing or Auspiciousness, as it was the path by which the Kshatriya or Brahman householders circumambulated the village in the immemorial rite of *Pradakshinā*, reciting *mantrams* to invoke the favours of the gods and to keep off evil spirits. This path was dedicated to the War-god, Kārttikeya, one of whose epithets is *Mangala*, on account of its use in the military defence of the village.

A broad belt of land surrounding the village boundaries was communal property cultivated by the villagers and the common pasture-ground of their cattle, which were strictly guarded from wild beasts and hostile raiders by the herdsmen and the sentinels posted on the high towers or palisades over the village gateways. Hence the latter were known as *gopurams*, or 'cattle-forts,' a name afterwards applied to the entrance gateways of Hindu temple enclosures which repeated the symbolism of the village plan. A general assembly of the freemen met every year to elect the village council, consisting of five members, who were presumed to represent the five social elements of the community, and to administer the affairs of the village according to Aryan law and custom. The elective principle, however, though nominally it applied even to the appointment of kings, was often superseded by the recognition of a hereditary right of office, vested in certain families, and

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only forfeited by some grave offence or neglect of duty. In this case the general assembly of freemen tended to become a consultative rather than an elective body, though its influence was generally strong enough to maintain popular rights, even in later times under the highly centralised government of the Mauryan and other imperial dynasties.

The sites of villages were carefully chosen according to principles, ritualistic and sanitary, observed in the traditions of the Indo-Aryan master-builder. They were generally on the bank of a river, by the seashore or the side of a lake, so that ample bathing facilities were easily accessible. Bathing was regarded as a religious rite in itself, and a necessary preliminary for sacrificial rites; the Devas, 'the Shining Ones,' who were the guardian spirits of the Aryan people, loved the places which by nature or artifice were provided with water and pleasant gardens. The soil of the proposed site was examined to ascertain whether it was fit for cultivation and whether good drinking water was procurable sufficiently near the surface. When the site was determined and the blessing of the gods had been invoked in the presence of the assembled people, the ground was ploughed over. A new plough specially made for the occasion was yoked to a pair of oxen, strong and without blemish, with gold or silver rings on their horns and hoofs, and the master-builder who directed the ceremonies turned the first furrow. The oxen and plough were afterwards presented to him as his perquisite, the people doing him reverence as their guru. Then various kinds of sacrificial grain were sown in the soil, and when the crops had grown and come into flower the cattle of the community were turned out to graze upon them. The site was then ready for the building operations. The master-builder oriented the village boundaries by means of the shadow of a gnomon, fixed the position of the gateways, and laid out the two main streets in the form of the cosmic cross. Then, squaring out the whole area into the mystic figure called *Paramāsāyika*,[1] he determined

[1] The close connection of this geometrical system with Vedic sacrificial lore and the position of the master-builder as a high priest, or sacrificial

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the auspicious sites for shrines, orchards, reservoirs, wells, and blocks of houses, and the lay-out of the streets according to the special needs of various social grades and the nature of the ground.

The Silpa-Sāstras give many different types of village plans, such as a village adapted for a community which was exclusively Brahman, one which contained all five classes, and others based upon the swastika and other symbolic figures. For the purpose of co-operation and for mutual defence villages combined in groups of ten, twenty, a hundred, and a thousand or more, each group clustering round a fort or stronghold under the command of a tribal chieftain who owed allegiance to the overlord of the next largest group. In return for the protection thus afforded, every village, through its headman, paid a certain *vali* or tax into its chieftain's treasury, or in lieu of this furnished him with a certain number of fighting men, or with cattle or produce. The chieftain in his turn had to pass on a similar proportion of his revenue to the head of the group above him, who in the same way contributed to the treasury of his overlord. The principle of combination and co-operation was applied also to the upkeep of roads, the construction of irrigation works, travellers' rest-houses, public assembly halls, and the laying out of public parks, as well as to agricultural work, trade, and handicraft.

It is usual to consider early Aryan religion as founded upon the compilation of sacred hymns, ritualistic practices, and philosophic ideas contained in the Vedas, but unless one endeavours to relate these fragmentary records of Aryan poetry and religion to their natural context in Aryan daily life

expert, are indirect proofs of the great antiquity of the Indian science of town-planning, for geometry as a science was an Indo-Aryan invention and had its origin in the complicated system of Vedic sacrifices in which it became necessary to resolve geometrical problems such as constructing a circle equal in area to a square, or *vice versa*. The lay-out of the Indo-Aryan village is treated in the Silpa-Sāstras as the preparation of sacrificial ground. I have therefore considered it justifiable to refer it historically to the Vedic period and to connect it with the camp or fortified settlement of the early Aryan invaders. There are distinct references to it in the Buddha's teaching, as will be seen further on.

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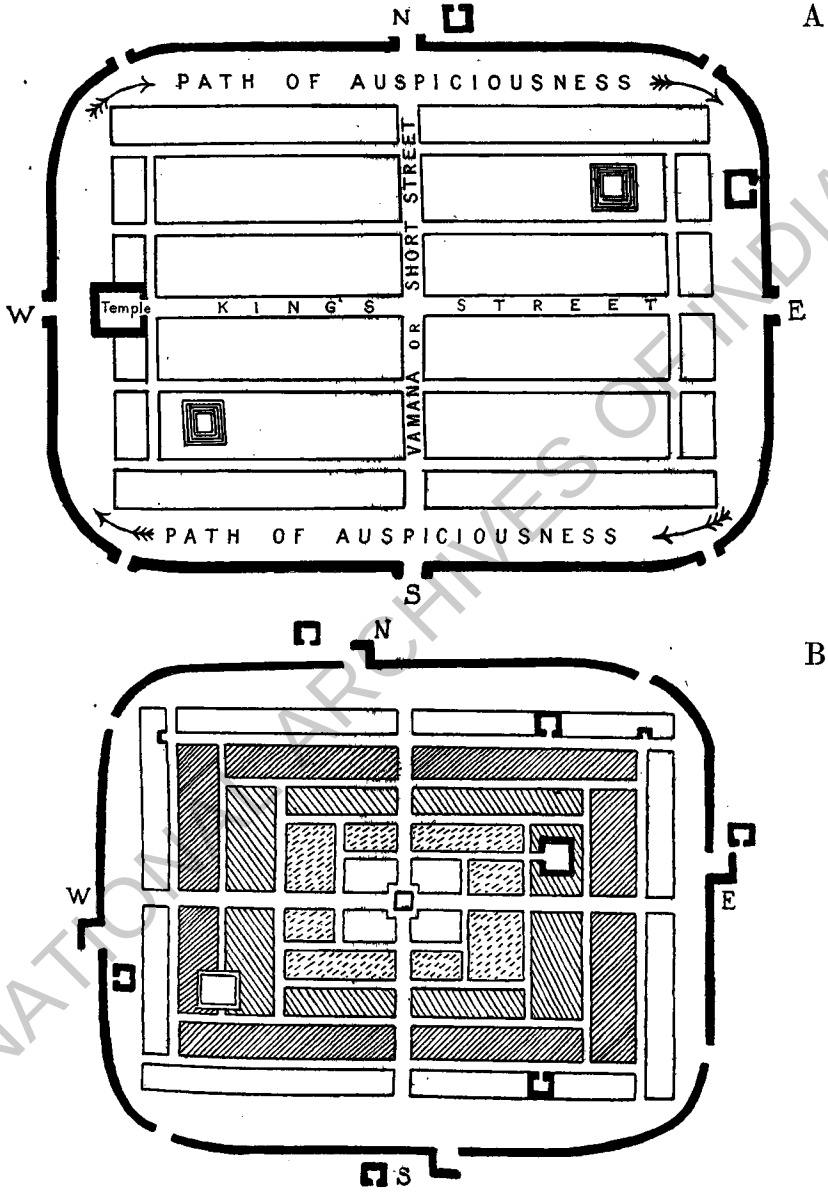

2. Indo-Aryan Village Plans

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it is difficult, if not impossible, to view them in right perspective. It can hardly be doubted that the three aspects of modern Hindu worship—that of the *Ishta-devata*, or the divinity of the self, the *Grihya-devata*, or the divinity of the household, and the *Gramya-devata*, the divinity of the village community—correspond to the ancient tradition of Vedic sacrifices, in which the head of the Aryan household had a threefold religious duty to perform—towards his god, his family, and his tribe. The *Sandhyā*, or daily ritual of the Brahman, performed at sunrise, noon, and sunset, also belongs to the immemorial traditions of Aryan religion, in which the sun was worshipped as the symbol of the Unknown Power in the universe, governing all other natural powers. This tradition, as we have seen, grew up with the organisation of the Aryan village, in which the Mangalavithi, or path surrounding the village, was consecrated for the performance of the rite of *Pradakshinā*, symbolising the path of the sun across the heavens or the turning of the wheel of life and death.

The *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*, one of the oldest codes of Hindu polity and sociology, gives the names of the four principal gates of the Aryan town or village. The eastern gate, the starting-point of the circumambulatory rite, was dedicated to Brahmā, the Creator, represented by the rising sun. The southern gate, which symbolised the sun at noon, was dedicated to Indra, the Vedic god who ruled the firmament of the day. The western gate was dedicated to the setting sun, or to Yama, the Lord of Death, and the northern gate to Senapati, or Kārttikeya,[1] the War-god. The Upanishads shaped this primitive nature symbolism into definite philosophic concepts, and Vishnu-Sūrya, 'the All-Pervading,' then took the place of Indra at the zenith, Siva appropriated the attributes of Yama and his position in the western sky, while the concept of the cosmic Slumber, under the name of Vishnu-Nārāyana, took the place of the War-god at the nadir.

[1] Kārttikeya was the War-lord as the offspring of Siva, the Destroyer. He presided over the lunar mansions on account of his association with the sunset.

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It was upon this ancient symbolic rite of the Indo-Aryan village—the rite of the Cosmic Cross or the Wheel of Life—that the Buddha based his doctrine of the Aryan Eightfold Path—the new Way of Life which would release mankind from suffering; for, as we have seen, there were usually eight gates in the village walls, one in the centre of each side, and one smaller one at each corner.

The early Vedic symbols of natural powers—Sūrya, the Sun; Agni, the Fire-spirit; Indra, the Wielder of the Thunderbolt, the Rain-producer, and the power which ruled the heavenly dome by day; and Varuna, the Concealer, the ruler of the night sky—mostly belonged to the remote period of Aryan religion, before the race appeared on Indian soil and before the philosophic concepts of the Upanishads had been formulated. Vishnu and Siva, in their early materialistic conception, were both mountain deities, and seem to have come into Indo-Aryan cosmogony when the Aryans had their home in the Himālayan regions and when all the phenomena of tropical nature had begun to shape their ideas. Vishnu, the fertile mountain, gay with flowers and trees, upon which an Aryan tribe would often build their chieftain's fort, was always identified with the interests of the Kshatriyas and regarded as their patron deity. Later he became the all-pervading Spirit of Life, moving spirally, like a serpent, around the vertical arm of the cosmic cross, or the line joining the zenith and nadir. Then his mountain was considered as the pivot or axis of the cosmic forces, and his mystic tree which grew thereon had the blue sky for its foliage and the sun and moon and stars for fruits. In the night Vishnu (Nārāyana) slept upon the cosmic waters guarded by the serpent of Eternity, Sesha or Ananta (the Milky Way), and awoke at dawn to meet his bride, Lakshmi, the bright goddess of the day, who brought prosperity to mankind.

Siva, the Spirit of Death, the guardian of the western gate of the village, or the gate of the setting sun, took concrete form in the snow-clad mountain upon whose summit nature seems to retire within herself, as if wrapt in meditation. But

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just as the Himālayan mountain glacier is the fountain from which pour the life-giving waters of the five rivers of the Aryan holy land, so Siva as well as Vishnu had a dual aspect. He was lord both of life and of death. Pārvatī, or Umā, the fair daughter of Himālaya, and the symbol of spring, once a year lured Siva from his profound meditation, caused his snow-white mantle to melt partially away, and decked the mountain slopes with bridal garlands. Siva was the horizontal arm of the cosmic cross containing the sunrise and the sunset. He was Creator and Destroyer. The circle which contained both ends of the cross was the wheel of life and the serpent of reincarnation.

Oriental scholars have long sought to discover by way of philological research at what period of Indian history the two great schools of modern Hinduism, the Saiva and Vaishnava, had their starting-point, and, taking their stand upon philological data only, have drawn a hard-and-fast distinction between the Hindu and Vedic religion because the names of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva do not come into prominence until a late period of Sanskrit literature. But philology taken by itself cannot show the relationship between the word and the idea or give the symbol representing a religious concept its proper place in the daily life of a people. Names are constantly changing with the development of old ideas, though all the powers of nature which suggest those ideas to the human mind remain unchanged.

The tangle of terminology in which, to the Western mind, Indian religious thought is involved may be unravelled by the study of the symbolism contained in its ritual, which has remained fixed in its association with the cosmic forces worshipped by the ancient Aryans in spite of all terminological changes. The symbol of the cosmic cross, the wheel of life, or four-petalled lotus-flower shown overleaf, which is embodied in the plan of the Indo-Aryan village and temple, contains the four fundamental concepts upon which all Hindu religious cults have been built from the remotest Vedic period down to the present day, whether they represented the earliest

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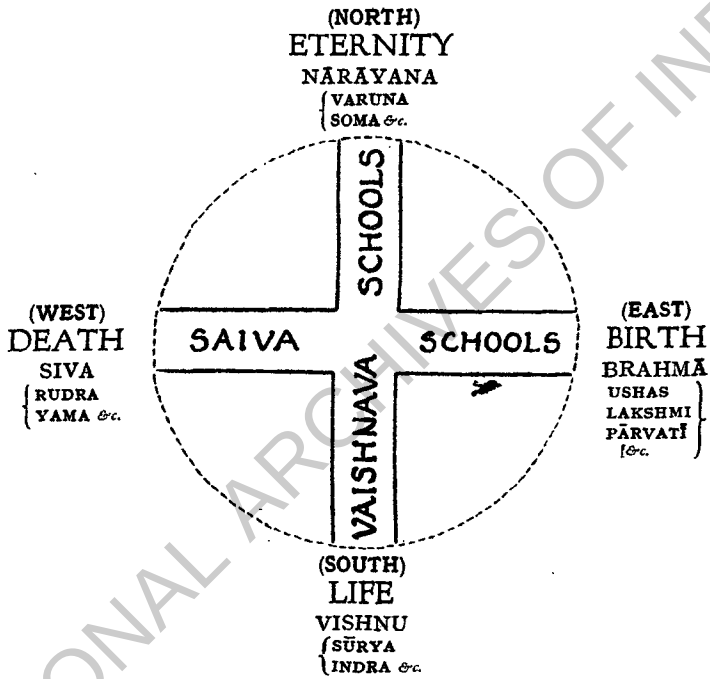
Aryan nature-worship or the esoteric philosophy which grew out of it. And just as Birth and Death, Life and Eternity, symbolised by sunrise and sunset, noon and midnight, are always immutable factors in the history of human thought, so the historian may disregard the time when a particular



Sanskrit name was attached to them in successive periods if he gives to each its proper place in the symbolic plan upon which all Indian philosophical concepts were based. It will then become clear that there must always have been Saiva and Vaishnava distinctions in Indo-Aryan religious thought, whatever names may have been given to them, just as there are optimists and pessimists in all ages and always a conflict in human nature between the will to live and the higher spiritual instinct.

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Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva may be regarded as collective names standing for all the symbols which Indo-Aryan religion associated with Birth, Life, and Death in the abstract. *Nārāyana* may be taken as a collective name for all the symbols of the future life and eternity; and as the first three ultimately merge into eternity, so according to Vedantic teaching they represent the Three Aspects of the One Eternal.

It was not without reason that the Vedas were held to contain the whole essence of Aryan religion, even after the names of the older Vedic deities fell into disuse; for though the concepts of Vedic philosophy were expanded by the later schools, and though new names were given to the old symbols as they came to bear a deeper and wider significance, the root-ideas are to be found in the Upanishads and the Vedic religion was the moving spirit of the organisation of the Aryan village communities, which, in the words of Sir Charles Metcalfe, "contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence." [1]

To the philosopher Vishnu and Siva were concepts representing two different logical processes, the inductive and deductive, and two different schools of thought. The former was a scientific school which took its stand upon *smriti*—reasoned knowledge and the law of cause and effect based upon the facts of human experience; the latter depended upon insight or inspiration, known as *sruti*, or divine revelation, of which the Vedas were said to be the highest expression. The Kshatriya thinkers were men of action who generally adhered to the Vaishnava school of thought, while the Brahman philosophers mostly belonged to the Saiva school. It is hardly necessary to say that there was always a wide gulf between popular notions of religion and the profound speculations of the Aryan philosopher.

[1] Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1832. See Elphinstone's *History of India*, Book II, chap. ii.

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Vishnu, popularly, was a deified hero, a great Kshatriya teacher, reincarnated from time to time to instruct the Aryan race and lead them to victory; Siva was an ascetic whose hermitage was fixed in some mountain cavern amidst Himālayan ice and snow, where through the third eye of spiritual insight all the secrets of the universe were made known to him.

Great as the achievements of the Aryan philosopher undoubtedly were in the field of abstract thought, they were not more remarkable than the success of a small colony of people, vastly outnumbered by the congeries of different races which India has probably always contained, in welding together these heterogeneous elements intellectually, socially, and politically in the organisation of the village communities; so that though each political, social, and racial unit retained its own individuality, India became a synthesis of people with common traditions of polity and religion living together within the Aryan pale. The result was not less remarkable because several of the non-Aryan elements, especially the Dravidian, made great intellectual contributions to the common fund, and because the Aryan racial type never became very widely distributed over the whole of India. Ethnographic investigations show that the Indo-Aryan type described in the Hindu epics—a tall, fair-complexioned, long-headed race, with narrow, prominent noses, broad shoulders, long arms, slim waists "like a lion," and thin legs like a deer—is now (as it was in the earliest times) mostly confined to Kashmīr, the Panjab and Rājputāna, and represented by the Khattris, Jāts, and Rajputs.

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CHAPTER II

THE EPIC AGE

THERE is no record of any striking event like the landing of Hengist and Horsa at Ebbsfleet, from which we can date the beginning of Indian history. All that can be gathered from philological evidence is that at some remote period, reckoned from between 3000 and 1000 B.C. or earlier, a number of Aryan tribes whose poets sang the sacrificial hymns of the Rig-Veda, dedicated to the powers of nature—the Sun, the Sky, the Rain-spirit, the Storm-wind, Soma the Moon, the Fire-spirit—and to the Unknown God who created all things, had established themselves in North-western India, in the districts now contained by the Panjab and Eastern Afghanistan, which they called Brahmāvarta, the Holy Land or Land of Prayer. They were divided into clans, of which the Kshatriyas formed the aristocracy and priesthood, the Brahmans being as yet merely assistants at the tribal sacrifices. The lower orders, which, though more or less mixed in race, were classed as Aryans, were engaged in trade and agriculture. The organisation of the village communities was already essentially complete. Each village managed its own affairs through its council of elders, and the assembly of the whole people elected its war-lord to lead the tribe, or federation of tribes. Wars between the different Aryan tribes as well as struggles with the non-Aryan 'barbarians,' the Dāsyus or Dāsas, were frequent, but as in the former case it was a fixed principle that war should not be made merely for acquisition of territory, and that a conquered Aryan king should not be deposed but should become the tributary of his conqueror, tribal quarrels probably did not greatly disturb Aryan social order: these inter-tribal wars

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were more of the nature of gladiatorial combats in which the Kshatriya warriors exhibited their prowess. The chieftain who had been the rāja of five hundred villages might by his victory become the mahārāja of a thousand, and as such exact tribute from the rāja of the conquered group, but no war-lord, however great, was above the common law of the Aryan people, or could presume to curtail the liberties of their freemen. "Never shall an Arya be subjected to slavery"[1] was the charter of the race even under the rule of the Mauryan emperors.

This epoch of unknown antiquity in which the Vedic Aryans, who called themselves the *Panch-janah* or 'the Five Peoples,'[2] lived in the land of the Five Rivers, and had for their sacred lore the Vedic hymns and ritual, and the philosophy of the Upanishads, was followed by another one which may be described as the Epic Age, since it was the period in which the events recorded in the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* occurred, namely the Great War and the invasion of Southern India by the Aryans. At the beginning of this epoch, or somewhere between the first and second millenniums before Christ, the Aryans had spread themselves over the *Madhya-dēsa*, or 'Middle Country,' corresponding approximately to the modern United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and were pushing themselves further east along the valley of the Ganges into Vanga, or Bengal. Though Aryan culture afterwards diffused itself over the whole of Southern India, the Vindhya Mountains, which separate Northern India from the Dekhan, remained the southern boundary of the land known as Āryāvarta, or the land of the Aryans, held to be crescent-shaped, like the moon on Siva's brow. Hence Āryāvarta was also known as the Land of the Moon (Indu), and every bend of a river or crescent-shaped hill-scarp, bathed by a mountain torrent, was a symbol of this holy land—a place propitious for the Vedic sacrifice and fit for meditation or the hermit's cell.

[1] *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*, Book III, chap. xiii.

[2] The name referred either to five principal tribes, or perhaps to the five classes of Aryans.

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The principal political development of this epoch was the gradual consolidation of the small tribal confederations which characterised the Vedic period into considerable states ruled by hereditary dynasties. The explanation of the origin of kingship given in the Mahābhārata is the state of anarchy into which Āryāvarta had fallen owing to the absence of a strong ruling hand to enforce social laws, and to the neglect of Aryan tradition, which no doubt followed the frequent admission of aliens to the privileges of freemen, as the Aryans gradually spread themselves further over the country. But in Aryan polity the divine right of kings was never recognised as a personal attribute of the monarch, belonging to himself and his family. He had no right except that which was conferred upon him by Aryan law, and he could be fined or deposed by the General Assembly of the freemen, or by the Council of Ministers, if he neglected his duties as king or offended against that law. The hereditary principle was recognised as a safeguard for the maintenance of Aryan tradition, the king's family being regarded as the one amongst the others of the ruling class which should be most expert in the duties of kingship. Theoretically the king should be chosen from the Kshatriya class, as being that which by birth and training was best prepared for the responsibilities of royalty; but the rule was by no means a fixed one, and even a Sūdra might in time of war win his way to the throne by virtue of his military prowess. The king's chief duty was the protection of the State. He should "first subdue himself and then seek to subdue his foes. How should a king who has not been able to conquer his own self be able to conquer his foes?"[1] "In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness: in their welfare his welfare: whatever pleases himself he should not consider as good."[2] In his coronation oath, which he was to take "mentally, physically, and verbally," he swore to see to the advantage of the State, "considering always as God whatever is law and whatever is in accordance with ethics and

[1] Mahābhārata, *Rāja dharmānu çāsana Parva*, Sect. LXIX, 4.
[2] *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*, "The Duties of a King," chap. xix.

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whatever is not opposed to policy. I will act according to that and will never act arbitrarily." [1]

The so-called modern ideal of kingship is, in fact, as old as Indian civilisation. According to Aryan law the king held the same position in the macrocosm of the State as the *grāmanī* or headman of the village community did in his smaller sphere. He was bound to consult his ministers, who, like the elders of the village, were representative of all the five classes of freemen, and were selected for their knowledge of Aryan tradition to advise the king in all important affairs of State, and to assist him in the administration of Aryan law.

There is no detailed account of the exact constitution of the king's council given in the epics,[2] but in the fully organised Aryan state described in the oldest Aryan law-books the ministers were generally ten in number—or eleven including the crown prince. The first minister of the Crown was the royal *Purohita* or chaplain, whose qualifications were to be equal to his high position. He was the king's chief spiritual adviser, and should be competent "both to curse and bless." Besides being learned in the Vedas and versed in *Mantras* and sacred rites, a man of great strength of character and strict morals, so that even the king should fear his anger and listen to his correction, he was to be thoroughly versed in politics and diplomacy, should know the science of archery in all its branches, and be a master of military arms and tactics. The *Pratinidhi*, 'the Deputy' or viceroy, who came next in rank and emoluments, was a kind of privy councillor who, if the king failed to listen to good advice, should "go on explaining."[3] The *Pradhāna* was the president of the council, who apportioned to each member his special share of work. Next came the *Sachiva*, or War Minister, the *Mantri*, or Foreign Minister, the *Prādvivāka*, or Chief Justice, the *Pandit*, the *Sumantra*, or Finance Minister, the *Amātya*, or Home Minister, and lastly,

[1] Mahābhārata, *Santi Parva:*

[2] In the Rāmāyana there were eight councillors—two Brahman spiritual advisers and an executive council of six.

[3] *Sukrā-nitisāra*, translated by Benoy Kumar Sarkar, M.A., chap. ii, p. 178.

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the head of the police—the chief spy, who also fulfilled the functions of an ambassador.

Such a highly organised form of administration did not apparently exist in the times of the epics, but the principles of polity which underlie it belong to the earliest traditions of Aryan statecraft. The rights of the Aryan freemen were always to be respected. The people, says Manu, are to be protected from official underlings, who "are generally knaves, and seize what belongs to other men" (vii, 123), and even in conquered states the king should not interfere with popular customs—the laws declared in their books were to be established (*Manu*, vii, 203).

These are the theories of kingship laid down in the ancient Hindu law-books. We may safely assume that theories did not always coincide with practice, since human nature has its failings in the East as in the West, and though these might have been the principles usually accepted as Aryan by the people of that race, there must have been times when the stern necessities of war enforced the suspension of the ordinary law and gave the king the powers of a dictator. But it must not be supposed that the authority of the king and his ministers entirely superseded that of the local assemblies and village councils. This was not the case even in medieval times, when the royal edicts continued to mention these democratic institutions in terms of great deference. A distinction was always drawn between imperial and local concerns. The officers and servants of the king were to live outside the villages, and no soldier of the king was to enter a village except on royal business; neither were villagers to have dealings with the military (*Sukrā-nitisāra*, v, 180–182).

The principal kingdoms mentioned in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana were that of the Panchālas, lying between the Ganges and the Jumna, with Mathurā, near the modern Agra, and Kānyakubja (Kanauj) as its two chief cities; Kosala, which had its capital at Ajodhyā, near Faizabād; the smaller kingdoms of Videha and Magadha—the capital of the latter being Rājagriha—comprised in the present districts of North

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and South Bihār; and the kingdom of Kāsī, the modern Benares. Besides these kingdoms there were numerous confederations of tribes in which regal authority was exercised not by a single ruler but by a council of noble families, and other states whose political organisation was purely republican, the General Assembly and its executive committees controlling all the affairs of the community. But whether the central authority was monarchical, an oligarchy, or republican, the village was the political unit of the State, and the rights of the soil were vested in the family of the freeman who cut away the wood or who cleared and tilled it, the State receiving its taxes as remuneration for the protection it afforded him, but the freeman remaining owner of the land, as he continued to be in Rājputāna down to modern times.[1]

A natural consequence of the consolidation of the Aryan tribal system into these larger states and kingdoms was the gradual development of the village settlements into large towns and cities planned on the same principles in which the different wards, or village units, were grouped round the royal palace and citadel. The royal capitals became industrial and trading centres, the duties imposed upon merchandise forming part of the State revenue. The Indus and other great waterways upon which the early Aryan settlements were placed were important trade routes linking together the military roads maintained by the State, along which passed the caravans laden with gold, precious stones, and spices from Southern India which added to the magnificence and luxury of the royal courts of Āryāvarta as well as those of Western Asia and Europe. And as the Brahmans gradually became the custodians of Aryan traditions and culture, the *asram*, or Brahman village, developed into the university town to which Aryan youth of the twice-born classes went for instruction. But while the seaports, the halting-places for caravans, and the centralisation of government, all tended to promote the growth of city life, it always remained a characteristic of Aryan culture that the greatness of the city—which was the

[1] Tod, *Annals of Rajast'han*, p. 492.

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product of the vitality of the village—and its political influence never restricted the independence of the latter or narrowed its outlook upon life.

The increasing influence of the Brahman aristocracy began to have very important consequences, both politically and socially. For not only did the Brahmans, as experts in sacrificial lore, obtain the respect due to religious teachers, but they also challenged the supremacy of the Kshatriyas, the political and military leaders, on the ground that the strict discipline of mind and body which was a fundamental principle of Aryan philosophy was as indispensable for success in war and politics as it was for the spiritual development of those who sought divine truth. The Brahman university became a school of arms and military tactics, diplomacy and political science; and just as Drona in the Mahābhārata was the Brahman instructor of the Pāndava heroes in the use of the bow and other weapons of war, so the Brahman diplomatist and politician became the chief among the ministers who formed the royal council.

It must be admitted that, theoretically at least, there was much force in the Brahman contention. The attempt to enforce ethical considerations in the conduct of State policy, which was the justification of the position of the Purohita at the right hand of the War-lord, was the ground upon which the Christian Church in Europe asserted its claim for temporal power and privileges. In both cases the success or failure of the attempt depended almost as much upon the conscience of the people as upon the integrity and sincerity of their rulers. The Brahmans, however, as a class, never claimed for themselves the prerogatives of the kingly office, but only special rights as the king's philosopher and friend. The laws of Manu, a code drawn up by and for the Brahmans, distinctly reserves for Kshatriyas the power and position of sovereignty as defined by Aryan tradition. Nevertheless the feeling of rivalry between the two sections of Aryan aristocracy became stronger and stronger as their respective social positions and spheres of influence became more clearly defined. The Kshatriyas were

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as little disposed to submit to any curtailment of their political and social privileges as they were to accept without reserve Brahman leadership in philosophy and religion, and the schism between Brahmanism and Buddhism can be traced to its starting-point in the divergent intellectual outlook which characterised the two schools of Aryan thinkers, Brahman and Kshatriya. The former was conservative and took its stand upon the Vedas as a divine revelation of which the Brahmans were the sole interpreters; the latter, more concerned with the problems of social life and with the necessity of maintaining harmony within the Aryan pale by a recognition of non-Aryan ideas and customs, was broader in its views and always sought to add to the store of Vedic wisdom by independent research.

The main plot of the Mahābhārata relates to the Great War, in which many of the Aryan clans in Madhyadēsa were the combatants; but the epic has also an ethical note as the story of the triumph of Pāndava chivalry and religious principle over the craft and unscrupulousness of the Kauravas. The leaders on the one side were five Kshatriya brothers, Yudhisthira, Bhīma, Arjūna, Nakula, and Sahadēva, the sons of King Pāndu, and on the other their ten cousins, the Kauravas, sons of King Pāndu's brother Dhritarāshtra, who was the chief of the Bhārata tribes at Hashtināpur. The Pāndavas, together with their common wife, Draupadi, were tricked into a penitential exile by the cunning of the Kauravas, who hoped thereby to supplant them in their royal rights. But with the powerful aid of the Kshatriya hero Krishna, represented as an inspired teacher and an incarnation of Vishnu, the Pāndavas placed themselves at the head of another confederation of tribes and exterminated the Kauravas in a great battle on the field of Kurukshetra, near the modern Delhi. Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pāndavas, was then crowned as the hereditary ruler of a great confederation, having its capital at Indraprastha, in which the vanquished allies of the Kauravas were included. The story of the Great War illustrates the process by which the Aryan and non-Aryan tribes were gradually consolidated into

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kingdoms under a powerful central government. The summary of the philosophy of the Upanishads, given as a divine revelation by the guru of the Pāndavas, Krishna, forms a religious nucleus interpreting the spiritual meaning of the fateful struggle, and numerous legends with a moral or religious purpose and monologues expounding the principles of Aryan polity are interwoven with the main plot of the epic.

The significance of the distinction between the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, that the former records the history of the *Sūrya-vamsa*, the race of Sūrya, and the latter that of the *Chāndra-vamsa*, the race of Chandra, is worth consideration. The conventional view is that of Indian court poets and astrologers, that Rāma had an imaginary pedigree going back to the Sun-god, Sūrya, and that the Pāndavas and Kauravas were reputed to be descendants of Chandra, the Moon. There may be real history behind this poetic fancy if the symbolism is rightly understood. The expression *Sūrya-putra*, 'the son of Sūrya,' or *Chandra-putra*, 'the son of Chandra,' when applied to human beings, refers to their spiritual and not their earthly father, or, in other words, to their patron deity, or *Ishta-devata*; just as the *Gangā-putras*—an inferior class of Brahmans who now attend to the wants of pilgrims at Benares—are not sons of Gangā in the literal sense, but her servants or devotees.

The Sūrya-vamsa, Rāma's family, were worshippers of Sūrya, while the Pāndavas and Kauravas were worshippers of Chandra. Sūrya was the chief deity of the Aryans in Babylonia in the second millennium before Christ,[1] so we may assume that the Aryan king of the Mitanni, Dushratta, who ruled in Babylon at that time, was one of the Sūrya-vamsa. It is not therefore surprising to find it recorded in the Rāmāyana that Dasharatha, of the royal house of Ajodhyā, also had Sūrya as his Ishta-devata. Vishnu-Sūrya was the patron deity of the Kshatriyas, while Chandra- or Soma-worship was a Brahmanical cult closely connected with that of Siva.

[1] Hall's *Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 201.

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The distinction between the Sūrya-vamsa and Chandra-vamsa of the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata was therefore analogous to that which divides the two main groups of Hinduism, the Vaishnava and Saiva, in the present day.

It is not without significance that in the Mahābhārata, Siva is put forward as the divine story-teller who records the history of the Pāndavas and Kauravas. The fact that Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, is made their guru, or spiritual teacher, suggests an attempt on the part of the pandits of a Vaishnava court to unite the Sūrya-vamsa and Chandra-vamsa in a new school representing a later development of Kshatriya doctrine; for the two schools were always intermingling and constantly borrowing from each other.

The Rāmāyana is probably older than the Mahābhārata as an epic, but the events recorded in it may have followed those of the Great War. It is the first literary record of the passing of the Aryans beyond the Vindhya Mountains, the southern boundary of Āryāvarta, and their penetration by armed force into Southern India. According to the story the leader of the expedition was Rāma, a prince of Ajodhyā, who, like Krishna, is regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu. He, and his devoted wife Sītā, an ideal type of Indian womanhood, were banished, like the Pāndava brothers, by a court intrigue, and went to a forest hermitage beyond the Vindhya Mountains on the banks of the Godāvari, accompanied by Rāma's faithful companion, his half-brother Lakshman. There, during the absence of Rāma on a hunting expedition, Sītā was abducted by the barbarian king of Ceylon, Rāvana, described as a magician of terrific strength and skill. Rāma thereupon roused the Aryan clans, and, gathering under his standard a great force of semi-civilised but brave aboriginal tribes of the South, he crossed over the straits which separate Ceylon from the mainland, stormed the demon-king's stronghold, and, having rescued Sītā, came back in triumph to Ajodhyā, where he was crowned as king in his father's place.

It should be remembered that the two Indo-Aryan epics belong to Kshatriya literature and record the prowess of the

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Aryan military class. We must not assume, from the absence of any mention of it in Kshatriya records, that the early Aryan settlements had no intercourse with the ancient Dravidian kingdoms until Aryan civilisation was carried into the South by force of arms. No doubt the Vaisyas, the Aryan 'people,' as distinguished from the nobles and priests, had commercial relations with the traders of Southern India long before any organised attempt was made to assert Aryan political supremacy over the Dravidian kingdoms—the peaceful penetration of the merchant, as usual, preceded, if it did not induce, the conquest by military force. Though the Tamil people retained their own language and many of their racial idiosyncrasies, they were deeply indebted to Aryan civilisation. Aryan influence must have been very great in the South long before the third century B.C., when Asoka sent his younger brother, Mahendra, to lead a band of Buddhist missionaries. The three oldest Dravidian dynasties of which there is any record, the Pāndya, Kerala or Chera, and the Chola, all claimed descent from the Aryan heroes of the Mahābhārata, and the Pāndya country, like that of the first Aryan settlements in Northern India, was divided into five tribal districts known as the 'five Pāndyas.' [1]

The small progress that has as yet been made in the study of the early history of Indo-Aryan civilisation is in great measure due to the fact that, beyond the literary record contained in Vedic literature and the epics, hardly any evidence has yet been discovered of the life and culture either of the cities mentioned in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana or those of the older Dravidian kingdoms in the South. The history of Indian art, so far as it is yet known, begins at the earliest only a few centuries before Christ, and the long epoch before that time, in which the foundations of Indian civilisation were laid, is still a blank as regards the archaeological material which contemporary civilisations in Egypt and Europe have so amply furnished. One reason for this is that the actual sites of these ancient cities are as yet unknown, for archaeological

[1] Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 405.

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research in India has only recently begun to penetrate beneath the surface of the ground. Another is the fact that the tropical climate of India is much more active than that of Europe in obliterating the traces of civilised life, while the tracts of desert sand in Rājputāna and elsewhere which might, as in Egypt, preserve the remains of buried cities for an indefinite period, have not yet been explored.

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CHAPTER III

THE BUDDHA AS A STATESMAN AND SOCIAL REFORMER

WE come now out of that misty period, the Vedic and Epic ages, in which chronological points are vaguely fixed by millenniums and centuries instead of by years, to the sixth century before the Christian era, from which time a more or less complete sequence of chronological data has been collected by the labours of Oriental scholars and archaeologists. From the Brahmanical point of view the advent of the Buddha, about the year 563 B.C., was the starting-point of the great heresy which obscured the divine light of Vedic revelation, and hastened the fatal progress of Āryāvarta along the paths of unrighteousness, which will not be arrested until at the end of the Kali age Vishnu's tenth avatar, Kalkin, comes riding on a white horse, sword in hand, to destroy iniquity and restore the divine rule of righteousness and truth.

That Gautama Buddha disputed orthodox Brahmanical theories of the universe as the leader of a new religious sect was no new or startling event in Āryāvarta. Aryan religion was already a synthesis of ideas, not a single dogma of belief. There was no subject more freely debated by Aryan thinkers than the great problems of human existence; provided that his theory conformed to accepted laws of logic and stood the test of debate, anyone could obtain a hearing in the public disputations which took place under the village council tree, in the temple porch, or in the palace of the king, so that new sects and schools of philosophy grew almost spontaneously on Indian soil, though few survived the struggle for existence. Nor was the Buddha philosophically an entirely original

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thinker. With regard to theories of the First Cause and of the human soul he was an agnostic of the Sānkhya school and a follower of Kapila, whose aphorisms were a part of Brahmanical philosophic traditions before Gautama began to preach at Sarnāth, and whose memory was enshrined in the name of the Buddha's birthplace—Kapilavastu.

In order to understand the cause of the rapid progress of the Buddha's religious propaganda it is necessary to realise the social conditions of the time, and the relations of the Brahmanical priesthood to the rest of the community. Not only had the Brahmans become an organised intellectual force which asserted for itself the leading position in political affairs hitherto held by the Kshatriyas, but in ministering to the religious needs of the Indo-Aryan community at large they had established a monopoly which lent itself to unscrupulous exactions and to the encouragement of the grossest superstitions. The ancient Vedic idea of the divine power of speech which had made Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, the *sakti*, or active force, of Brahmā the Creator, had developed into the philosophical concept of the *mantram* as the human expression of the etheric vibrations which permeate space and were the first knowable cause of creation itself. So far as was humanly possible the mantram, a Sanskrit formula composed of a certain sequence of sounds and rhythm, was said to control these etheric vibrations and produce effects, beneficial or the reverse, to the persons or objects concerned. A mantram could bring victory or defeat in wars, assure the prosperity of a state or the destruction of its enemies; it could be used to win votes in the popular assembly or to silence the arguments of an opponent, and either by itself or in conjunction with medicinal prescriptions it could stop a cough or promote the growth of hair. In short, the mantram embodied in itself the dynamic principle of the universe; there was no concern of daily life, great or small, which could not be affected by it for better or worse.

Now if the Brahman priesthood, as a class representing the intellectuality of the Aryan race, had lived up to the high

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ideal of purity and altruism set forth in the laws of Manu and accepted as the guiding principle of Brahmanhood, or if it had been possible to restrict the privileges of the order to those who were fully qualified to exercise them, their exploitation of the universal belief in the magical powers of the mantram, whether that belief were justified or not, might have been at the lowest reckoning harmless and at the highest a strong incentive to the growth of moral and religious life in the whole community. Even modern medical science, which has generally detached itself entirely from religious dogmas, has begun to revert to psychological remedies for the ills of the flesh, and the Sanskrit mantram as a form of prayer might be as acceptable to God as any other if the spirit which dictated it were truly religious. But the Brahmanical theory of the mantram implied that it contained in itself a divine principle, and the compelling power of the Deity Itself, though its use by ignorant or ill-disposed persons would be ineffectual or disastrous to themselves. The rule of life which the Brahman was presumed to follow was designed to prevent the abuse of the power of the mantram, but so long as Brahmanhood depended in the first instance entirely upon the accident of birth it would obviously fail in its purpose, and the influence exercised by unscrupulous or ignorant priests was bound to encourage superstition among the masses, and to become a hindrance to civilisation as well as a source of exaction and cruelty.

Another instrument of tyranny and deception placed in the hands of the Brahmans was the Aryan belief in the divine power of sacrifice, which had come down from the earliest Vedic times. In the course of many centuries the performance of sacrificial rites had grown into a fine art, which the Brahman experts were not slow to use for their personal advantage, for the efficacy of the sacrifice was said to depend largely upon the liberality of the indispensable *dakshina*, or reward, bestowed upon the officiating priests and their servants. Like the mantram, the application of Vedic sacrificial ritual extended to every concern of public and private life, great and small. The purity and divine power of the Brahman was said to

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be implicit in the fact that sacrificial rites were performed for his benefit from the time of conception in his mother's womb until his body was consigned to the bosom of holy Gangā or consumed in the funeral pyre. And not only did public sacrifices and the worship of tribal deities involve a vast expenditure of State revenues, but the household rites for which the services of Brahmans were generally necessary grew more and more numerous and complicated. Some of the great State ceremonies, such as the king's consecration and the horse sacrifice performed to secure victory and the welfare of the kingdom, absorbed the whole attention of the court functionaries for over a year, required the attendance of thousands of Brahmans and a corresponding bountiful distribution of largesse, besides inordinate feasting and wholesale slaughter of animals.

The due fulfilment of domestic sacrificial rites was equally onerous for the Aryan householder. Besides the ordinary daily rites at which the householder himself presided there were endless sacrificial ceremonies which required the attendance of Brahman experts. There were sacrifices for obtaining male offspring; birth sacrifices which had to be repeated every month; sacrifices of feeding, naming, piercing the ears, shaving the beard, and investiture with the sacred thread; and numerous others connected with ordinary daily events or with marriage and death ceremonies. The indiscriminate slaughter of animals and the free indulgence in the intoxicating juice of the soma plant associated with Vedic ritual involved the tacit recognition by the Aryan priesthood of many bloody and obscene orgies of the uncivilised non-Aryan tribes, in which human victims were frequently sacrificed.

Another superstition—though not by any means the exclusive property of the Brahman class—which the Buddha came to attack was the practice of *tapas*, or self-torture, by which it was believed that both gods and men acquired spiritual insight and command over the forces of nature. Sitting between five fires, or upon an ant-heap in the forest, standing upon one leg and holding an arm above the head until the

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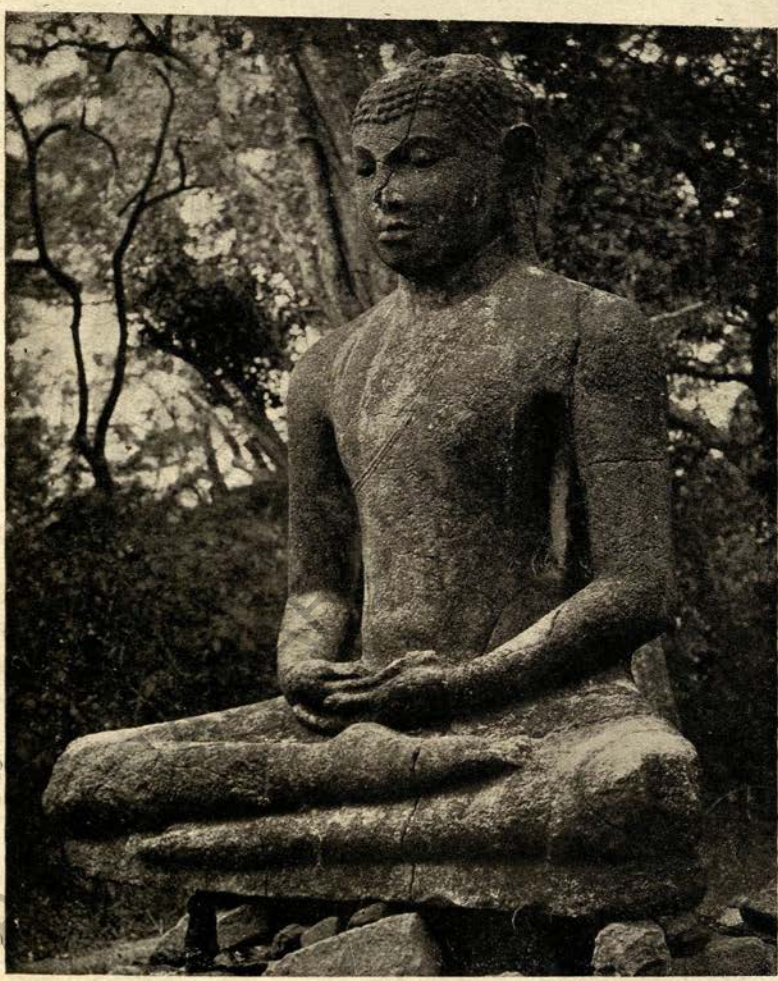

3. The Buddha under the Bodhi Tree

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muscles of it were atrophied, and a carefully graduated system of starvation were among the means adopted for subduing the physical senses, in the belief that if such conduct were pushed to the furthest extreme of human endurance men could become masters of the universe, and that even the gods must submit to their will.

It is easy to understand that in such a condition of society any new doctrine appealing to the deep religious instinct of the people which removed the terror of the mantram and the heavy burden of sacrificial ritual imposed by the Brahman priesthood would be hailed as an inspired dispensation alike by the ignorant masses from whom the Brahmans held aloof and by all the better spirits of Aryan culture. And no one could have been better qualified to make such an appeal than the young Kshatriya prince Gautama, who had renounced the dearest family ties, wealth, and a kingdom to discover a better rule of life for the people of Āryāvarta than that which was propounded by the Brahman teachers of his time. He had no doubt learnt from the Brahmans of his father's court at Kapilavastu, the capital of the Sākyas—a full-blooded Indo-Aryan clan settled in the Nepal Terai—all that a Kshatriya prince should learn of Brahmanical lore. He had gone further and sat at the feet of the most famous Brahman sages to study philosophy. In the endeavour to acquire a deeper insight into the mysteries of the universe he had learnt the ritual of Yoga, and in the gloomy depths of the Vindhya forests had practised the severest tapas prescribed for ascetics who sought divine knowledge through mortification of the flesh.

When, therefore, after long meditation under the Bodhi Tree at Gayā, the conviction of a profound truth flashed upon his mind and he started forth to preach the doctrine of the Aryan Eightfold Path, he was a master of all the philosophical theories current at his time. He was both able to meet the Brahman logician with his own weapons and to speak from personal experience of the religious observances to which all devout Aryans had pinned their faith from time immemorial.

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But if the young Kshatriya preacher had only stood forth in the public debating halls as an accomplished dialectician to confound the logic of the orthodox Brahman with incontrovertible arguments and to enforce the doctrines of Sānkhya and Yoga aphorisms with greater precision and clarity of thought, or if he had merely disputed the divine authority of the Vedas and the claims of the Brahmans to be the leading exponents of Vedic tradition, it is hardly likely that he would have stirred popular feeling profoundly, or that his teaching would have been regarded as a new revelation for the Aryan people. There were philosophers before the Buddha who disputed the Vedic theory of the Universal Soul. Among the 'Wanderers,' a fraternity of mendicant sophists open to all classes within the Aryan pale, the greatest freedom of thought prevailed, and in the public debating halls of Āryāvarta Brahmanical doctrines were controverted as freely as those of the orthodox Christian churches are at popular resorts of the present day in Europe. Brahmanism was an exclusive cult, hedged round with the closest restrictions to prevent the intrusion of the vulgar, though in special circumstances these restrictions might be relaxed, as through royal influence or in the stress of war-time.

The success of Gautama's mission must have been due partly to his own magnetic personality and the deep human feeling which inspired his teaching, and partly to the fact that he opened wide the doors of Aryan religion and satisfied the spiritual desires of the masses by offering them a religious law easy to understand and accessible to all, free from elaborate and costly ceremonial, raising the social status of the lower orders, giving them their spiritual freedom and making the life of the whole community healthier and happier.

Buddhism was much more a social than a religious revolution. It was a new interpretation rather than an entire repudiation of Vedic tradition. The sacrifice which would make anyone within the Aryan pale, Brahman or Sūdra, free of the *Sangha*—the brotherhood or congregation of believers—and potentially an adept in the mystic powers of the universe, was not of

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burnt offerings or of worldly goods, but the suppression of the fires of evil thought and action, of lust, hatred, envy, anger, and wrong thinking. The village of which every Aryan might be a freeman was his own body : of this body the senses were the gates, the conscience was the gatekeeper, and the mind the headman.[1] The Mangala-vīthi, or Path of Blessing, which encircled it was the Aryan Eightfold Path of Good Living, and the mantram which was the key to the mysteries of the cosmos was the supreme Aryan truth—the law of *Nirvāna*.

It was no new city which the Buddha desired to build, but an ancient Aryan one which he would restore to prosperity and healthy life. " As a man, brethren, wandering in the forest, in the mountain jungle, might see an ancient path, an ancient road, trodden by men of an earlier age ; and following it, might discover an ancient township, an ancient palace, the habitation of men of an earlier age, surrounded by park and grove and lotus pool and walls, a delightful spot ; and that man were to go back and announce to the king or his minister : ' Behold, sir, and learn what I have seen ! ' And having told him he were to invite the king to rebuild that city, and that city were to become anon flourishing and populous and wealthy once more :—Even so, brethren, have I seen an ancient Path, an ancient Road, trodden by Buddhas of a bygone age . . . the which having followed, I understand life, and its coming to be and its passing away. And thus understanding, I have declared the same to the fraternity and to the laity, so that the holy life flourishes and is spread abroad once more, well propagated among men." [2]

The Buddha's teaching must have been acceptable to Kshatriya feeling, both because it was directly opposed to the pretensions of the Brahman priesthood and because it upheld Aryan institutions and traditions. The Sangha which the Buddha founded was organised after the model of an Aryan clan ; it was a select spiritual brotherhood within the larger brotherhood of the secular Aryan community. There

[1] *Buddhism*, Mrs Rhys Davids, p. 181. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

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were four different grades of spiritual advancement within the Buddhist Sangha, as there were four classes denoting social status within the Aryan pale. And the Buddha was careful to ordain that his Sangha should not be used as a means of escaping secular obligations or of evading Aryan laws. No one could enter it to avoid payment of debts, neither were robbers, criminals who had been punished by branding, persons in the royal service, or slaves admitted.

In the political unification of England, under Saxon rule, the ecclesiastical synods founded by Theodore in the seventh century A.D. were the first of all national gatherings for general legislation, and the canons enacted by them led the way to a national system of law. In England, the Parliament of the Church established by a foreign missionary was the prototype of the Parliament of the realm.[1] But the Buddha's mission in India in the sixth century before Christ was in no sense a propaganda of foreign ideas, and the administration of the Buddhist Church—afterwards followed in many details by the Church of Christ—was based entirely upon the ancient political institutions of the Aryan village community which formed the foundation of Indo-Aryan polity. Thus, the early Buddhist records are historical documents which throw much light upon the constitution and procedure of these ancient popular Assemblies.

At the meetings of the Sangha all the members took their seats according to seniority, their places being assigned to them by an official called the *Āsana-prajinapaka*—'the Seat-arranger.' The proceedings opened by the president repeating the formula, "May the Honourable Sangha hear me! If the time seems fit to the Sangha, let the Sangha act. This is the motion before the Sangha." After the motion had been read the proposer of it explained its purport, and only those who disapproved of it continued the debate. The president put the question whether the motion should be accepted or not. If there was no opposition after it had been put three times it was declared carried; otherwise it was put to the vote and a

[1] Green's *Short History of the English People*, p. 32.

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majority of the Sangha, including absentees, decided the question. This was not, however, a system of government by majority vote in the modern political sense. In the Buddhist Sangha, as in the Aryan popular Assemblies, the unwritten traditional law was above any act of the Sangha and was not determined by a casual majority vote. No vote of the Sangha was valid which was contrary to the *Dharma*, the Truth or Law as revealed by the Buddha himself, which was the spiritual counterpart of the common law of the Aryan pale. The only authority competent to adjudicate when the correct interpretation of the Dharma was in dispute was the General Assembly of the Sangha, the summoning of which was an event as important in Indian life as a General Election in Western politics. The proceedings of the most important of these General Assemblies, *e.g.* the one held at Rājagriha in 477 B.C., and another at Vaisāli a century later, are recorded in the Buddhist annals. At ordinary meetings of the Sangha the teller of the votes, or arbitrator, who was elected for his impartiality, virtue, and knowledge, was charged with the duty of checking every decision of the majority, and of rejecting it as illegal if it were contrary to the Dharma.[1] The Indo-Aryan political system was therefore a compromise between arbitration and majority rule.

The Buddha's rare political insight revealed itself also in the method of all his teaching. He was most careful to insist that what he preached and the way his disciples should follow was the 'Aryan' way. All his metaphors were taken from the life of the Aryan village community. He was not less successful in appealing to the intellectuality of the Aryan aristocracy than he was in touching their racial sentiment. Even among the Brahmans there were many sincere believers in the divine revelation of the Vedas who were, nevertheless, dissatisfied with the methods of Brahmanical ritual, and could not be blind to the charlatanism and superstition involved in them. The accumulated experience of many generations had

[1] *Chullavagga*, iv, 14, 26. There were three ways of taking votes: the secret method, the whispering method, and the open method.

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brought the conviction to their minds that, however great might have been the virtue of the mantram, and of mystical rites as used by the Vedic rishis in an age of greater spiritual purity, the practice of their own time brought no results commensurate with the burdens imposed upon the State and upon the routine of daily life. The doctrine of the law of causation propounded by the Buddha offered to them a middle path between pure atheism and a blind adherence to a religion whose ritual had lost its efficacy; while the exact method of psychological analysis followed in the Buddhist schools might be accepted as a return to that profound study of natural causes and effects which had been the original basis of the concepts of Vedic philosophy.

Even the bright nature-spirits—'the Shining Ones'[1]—to whom the prayers and sacrifices of Vedic religion were addressed, were not to be deposed from the position of veneration they had always held in the minds of the Aryan people: the Buddha's teaching only made them subject to the same impersonal eternal order of things, expressed by the concept of the Dharma or Norm, by which "all things animate and inanimate, gods included, had their being."[2]

A clear illustration of the attitude of the early Buddhist Church towards Brahmanism is given in one of its earliest records, the *Vināya Pitaka*, or rules of discipline for the Sangha. Here Brahmā, the Creator, is made to appear as a suppliant before the Buddha, imploring him to make his message known to the world.[3]

While, therefore, the Buddha's propaganda naturally aroused bitter hostility among the Brahmans, whose vested interests were attacked, it was not really in conflict with the fundamental principles of Vedic religion or with the traditions of Aryan life. It was a reorganisation of Aryan society upon a wider basis, and a re-adaptation of religious thought to the spiritual needs of the times. The Dharma of sacrifice and mantram, which had become ineffec-

[1] Devas. [2] *Buddhism*, Mrs Rhys Davids, p. 48.
[3] Mahavagga, I, 5, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii.

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tive as practical politics for the Aryan people, was replaced by the Dharma of right thought and right living. The reason why the Buddha was denounced as a heretic, and from the Brahmanical standpoint regarded as an avatar of Vishnu [1] who came to rid the world of demons and wicked men by false doctrines which should lure them to destruction, was because his teaching, while outwardly conforming with the Vedic principles, opposed an agnostic view of the First Cause to the theory of a Universal Soul taught by the Upanishads, and because he lowered the standard of ritualistic purity upon which Brahman prestige depended, by breaking down the social barriers set up by the Aryan aristocracy.

If, as a system of philosophy, the Buddha's teaching failed to retain a permanent hold upon the Indian mind until its concepts were enlarged and modified by Brahmanical ideas, its influence upon Brahmanism in inducing greater clarity of thought and a more scientific method of psychological analysis was immense. An historical parallel might be found in the influence which modern scientific investigations have had upon the teaching of the Christian Church, for the Buddha substituted for the degenerate mysticism of contemporary Brahmanism a scientific system of psychological research which opened the way to new religious inspirations in the same way as modern criticism and science have given greater depth and a better focus to religious thought in Europe.

And just as modern science has approached towards a reconciliation with religious mysticism, so Buddhist and Brahmanical thought eventually found a *via media* along which they could go hand in hand. The Buddha's ethical teaching had the profoundest influence upon Brahmanism both in its ritualistic and spiritual aspects. Socially and politically Buddhism had the same effect in making India a nation as Christianity in the seventh century had in drawing together the petty principalities of the Saxon heptarchy. In breaking down the racial barriers of Āryāvarta, and clearing the spiritual

[1] He was said to be the ninth avatar, the forerunner of Kalkin, who is to restore the Law of Righteousness.

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atmosphere of superstition and priestly obscurantism, it bound together in closer ties of sympathy the whole political organisation of the Aryan pale, and thus helped to lay the foundations of the great empire of the Mauryan dynasty.

In the Western sense of the term the Buddha was not a religious teacher, but a divinely inspired interpreter of psychological laws, who showed the way by which mankind could be emancipated from the ills of the flesh and learn to be in harmony with themselves and with the universe. That, and not the propagation of religious dogmas or philosophical theories, has always been the true aim of Indo-Aryan religion. Indian philosophy as theory may have no interest for modern thinkers, but the vital part of it, its application to social and political life, still has a pregnant message for the world. The Buddha's prohibition of "the low arts of divination, spells, omens, astrology, sacrifices to gods, witchcraft, and quackery," relieved the Indian masses of a burden which had become a grievous impediment to their spiritual progress.

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CHAPTER IV

THE BUDDHIST AND JAIN SANGHAS—ALEXANDER'S RAID

MORE than two centuries elapsed after the death or *Pari-Nirvāna* of the Buddha, at Kusināgara in 483 B.C., before Asoka issued his imperial edicts which gave State recognition to the teachings of the Sākya Prince throughout the length and breadth of his vast dominions, and sent missionaries far and wide to preach the doctrine of the Aryan Eightfold Path to the world. Of the progress made by the Sangha, or Order, during the long life of the Buddha himself, and in the interval between his death and the accession of Asoka, comparatively little is known. But the detailed rules of the Order given in the *Vināya Pitaka*[1] are evidence that the Buddha possessed the genius for organisation which has always distinguished great Indo-Aryan leaders; for the daily life of the *bhikkus* in their monasteries was regulated with an attention to detail and thoroughness which would do credit to a modern Prussian barrack, though the spirit which moved the machine was the antipodes of Prussian militarism.

No doubt the work of the Sangha was from the first of a missionary character, and the wandering bhikkus, taught by the Master or trained in the Buddhist schools, who went from village to village and from court to court preaching the Good Law under the Council Tree at the four crossways, in the pilgrims' rest-houses, in the public debating halls, and in royal palaces, must have made many converts both among the lower classes and among the Kshatriya nobles, who were always ready to listen to new philosophical theories, especially if

[1] See *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. xiii, xvii, and xx.

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opposed to orthodox Brahmanical teaching. But for over two centuries the Buddhist Sangha was only one of many similar religious organisations which represented dissent from Vedic Brahmanism, though not influential enough to gain popular support or to win many powerful patrons among the Aryan aristocracy, either Brahman or Kshatriya. One of the most important of these was the Sangha of the Jains, or Nigranthas, founded by Mahāvīra, a contemporary of the Buddha, although his tenets are said to have been expounded by a succession of twenty-three earlier sages, the Tirthankaras —some Brahman and some Kshatriya—whose history is entirely legendary.

Mahāvīra himself was a Brahman, and he so far conformed to orthodox Brahmanical tradition that he recognised the practice of bodily mortification as a means of enlightenment; but, like Gautama, he denied the divine authority of the Vedas, denounced the cruelty of animal sacrifices, and proclaimed a religion of universal love and brotherhood. Philosophically Mahāvīra opposed to the monistic teaching of the Upanishads and the Buddha's agnostic doctrines a theory of the multiplicity of souls and of the permanence of matter. The universe was said to be divided into two elements—life and non-life. Every living being was said to be the centre of innumerable minute divisions of matter, called *Karmas*, possessing potential and kinetic energies, and surrounding and concealing the true nature of the soul.[1] Karmas were of two qualities, progressive and retrogressive, and could be generated by every embodied being through mind, speech, and action, either by one's self or through other beings. This theory of Karma differed from the Vedic one, which made sacrifice the directing and compelling force of the universe, and from the Buddhist one, in which Karma was entirely separate from matter. Every *Jiva*, or living being, said Mahāvīra, possessed a soul which by liberation from Karmas could attain to godhead or perfect omniscience. The twenty-four *Jinas*, or Conquerors of Self, worshipped by the Jains are those

[1] U. D. Barodia, *History and Literature of Jainism*, pp. 124–125.

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who are said to have attained to this absolute perfection of soul.

The Jain, like the Buddhist Sangha, was a fraternity in which the discipline of mind and body necessary for progress towards Nirvāna, or liberation of the Jiva from the effects of Karma, was taught; but the former organisation was made to include the laity, who merely abstained from flesh-eating and adapted the other ethical principles of Jainism to the ordinary vocations of life, as well as those who renounced the world and conformed to a more or less severe ascetic discipline. The Buddhist Sangha, on the contrary, did not include the laity, but was limited to those who were permitted to take the vows of the Order.

The field of Mahāvīra's mission was also in Magadha—afterwards known as Bihār, or 'the Land of Monasteries' (*vihāras*)—and in the neighbouring kingdoms of Videha and Anga. At his death in 467 B.C. the Jain Sangha is said to have numbered over five hundred thousand members, and subsequently the nine kings of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha (371–321 B.C.) were patrons of the Order. The founder of the Mauryan dynasty, Chandragupta, as well as his Brahman minister, Chanākya, were also inclined towards Mahāvīra's doctrines, and even Asoka is said to have been led towards Buddhism by a previous study of Jain teaching. Jainism and Buddhism have so much in common, that for many years European scholars believed that the modern Jain religion was wholly derived from Buddhism. They were both the outcome of the revolt against the orthodox Brahman cult, as it was developed in the land of the Five Rivers, which had its centre in Madhyadēsa in the sixth century B.C. The leaders of this revolt were both of Aryan race. In some respects it was a Vedic reformation, or revival of the spirituality of the ancient Aryan faith, but at the same time it coincided with the great expansion of the Aryan pale which took place in the course of centuries: the spiritual aspirations of the non-Aryan elements within the pale lent much force to the movement, and helped considerably to shape the thought which directed it.

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ARYAN RULE IN INDIA

Before we proceed to sketch the progress of Indo-Aryan civilisation after the death of Gautama, it is necessary to notice briefly the great political events which led up to the founding of the Mauryan dynasty in 321 B.C. The most picturesque and romantic is the famous raid of Alexander the Great into the Panjab, which took place five years before Chandragupta Maurya seized the throne of Magadha. It is usual to connect this great military achievement with the first opening up of intercourse between India and Europe, though such a view of it gives a very wrong impression of the mutual relationship of East and West in one of the most eventful epochs of the world's history. In the sixth and seventh centuries before Christ, though the political boundaries of the three great branches of the Aryan race—the Hellenic, Iranian, and Indo-Aryan—were clearly defined, and though political differences raised considerable barriers between them, there was a community of ideas and a similarity of spiritual aspirations binding the three branches together which no political distinctions could obliterate.

While Mahāvīra and Gautama were propounding their theories of the universe in the debating halls of Magadha, Heracleitus of Ephesus was discoursing on elemental matter and the nature of the soul in the porticoes of Ionian temples. About the same time Pythagoras of Samos preached the doctrine of the One in Many, and founded a religious Sangha in which strict abstinence from animal food was enforced.[1] The cities of Ionia, and not Athens and Sparta, were then the centre of Hellenic culture, and the antithesis implied in the modern use of the terms East and West had no application to the international conditions of that period. Commercial intercourse between the Greek cities of Asia Minor and India, through the Euphrates valley, must have been considerable, and the lack of facilities of travel according to modern ideas probably was no greater impediment to the enterprising Ionian than it was to European travellers in the days of Marco Polo.

[1] H. B. Cotterill, *Ancient Greece*, p. 209 (Harrap).

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BUDDHIST AND JAIN SANGHAS

Along the main trade routes which stretched from Southern India into Asia Minor, travelling in those times was perhaps no more difficult and dangerous than it remained until the introduction of railways. Pilgrims and merchants did not recognise the artificial boundaries set up by historians and the political rivalries of states, and if there is little circumstantial evidence of the extent of their travels, it is because in this age hardly anything was thought worthy of epigraphical record except military expeditions, political laws, and the chronicles of kings. In the history of civilisation, however, the watershed of the mountainous region which stretches from the north-eastern corner of India into the heart of Asia Minor and the valleys of the mighty rivers which flow from it formed a continent by itself in which the three branches of the Aryan race were, in the sixth century before Christ, in close contact with each other. The differences between them arose from political circumstances rather than intellectual antipathies, and these political circumstances were largely governed by the strength or weakness of the Aryan element in the population. Where the Aryan element, racial or intellectual, predominated, the political tendency was towards popular institutions and constitutional government. Where it was weak the autocratic principle of government prevailed.

In 538 B.C., or about the time when the Prince Siddhartha is said to have left his home and palace for the life of an ascetic in search of spiritual wisdom, Cyrus the Great overthrew Babylon and became the autocrat of an empire which comprised all the Aryan lands in Asia north of the Himālayas. Aryan culture had not penetrated very deeply into the mass of the population of this vast empire, but the dominant power in it, which was Persian, maintained the high spiritual ideals of the Aryan race.

Zoroaster, who is believed to have lived about this time, was an Aryan thinker of the Vedic school who protested against sacerdotal corruption and obscurantism, and some writers have suggested that the Persians under Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius were inflamed with a desire for world-conquest

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by the spiritual enthusiasm aroused by Zoroaster's teaching.[1] But in Persia the Magi, who corresponded to the Brahmans in India, were politically a very powerful class: the Aryan aristocracy held themselves proudly aloof from the non-Aryan masses, and Zoroaster does not appear to have been—like the Buddha and Mahāvīra—both a philosopher and social reformer who could arouse a widespread religious fervour, such as that which under Asoka broke down racial barriers and made India a nation. The Magi successfully resisted any encroachment upon their prerogatives, and the autocracy centred in the great cities of Iran failed to consolidate the loosely cohering racial elements of the empire, as Chanākya and Chandragupta did through the Indo-Aryan system of local self-government. There is little evidence to show how far the Indo-Aryan system of administration prevailed in the empire of the Achaemenidae. The 'royal road' of 1500 miles between Sardis and Susa, mentioned by Herodotus, is strikingly suggestive of the Rājapatha and the four crossways of the Indo-Aryan village; but the popular assemblies, if they existed, probably had very little political influence in such a highly centralised system of government, though when Darius—a scion of the royal house—succeeded to the throne in 521 B.C. some form of election seems to have been observed.

The conflict of the free cities of Hellas with Darius of Persia was, however, the assertion of Aryan political principles against irresponsible autocracy rather than an opposition of intellectual and spiritual ideals, or a struggle between Western civilisation and Eastern barbarism, as it is usually represented. Even Herodotus was constrained to admit the moral virtues and magnanimity of the Persian character—their intense love of truth and contempt for deceit and treachery—principles which later Greek historians notice with surprise were respected in Aryan society south of the Himālayas at least as much as they were in Hellas.

After the death of Cyrus the Persian Empire was further enlarged by the conquest of Egypt. Darius I added an Indian

[1] H. R. Hall, *Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 555.

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province which paid the enormous annual tribute of 360 Euboic talents—185 hundredweights—of gold-dust and sent a contingent of archers to the imperial army. It was a natural sequence, therefore, when about two centuries later the Macedonian autocracy had become supreme in Hellas, that Alexander should seek to follow up the destruction of the Persian empire by appropriating the wealth which India had accumulated under the Indo-Aryan village system, though by that time the provinces south of the Indus had thrown off the suzerainty of Persia. The brilliant feat of arms by which Alexander only partially achieved his purpose is only important in Indian history as an incident leading up to the foundation of the Mauryan Empire. Alexander's expedition did not lead to the opening up of new highways between East and West—rather the reverse.

Two years after Alexander left India the few provinces he conquered had thrown off the Macedonian yoke, the Greek garrisons he left behind were annihilated, and the consolidation of the Indo-Aryan power under the Mauryan dynasty for a long time prevented any further aggression from the north-west. The raid itself could have left no impression upon Indian civilisation. In the after-period, when Greece had lost all political influence and the light of Hellenic inspiration grew more and more dim, Indo-Aryan civilisation continued to advance, and showed no signs of decadence a thousand years later. The conditions which made Greek culture an inspiration for her Roman conquerors had no counterpart in India. The Indo-Aryans, unlike the Romans, had their classic literature, their epics and philosophy, before Athens was built. The classics of Greece in art and literature were part of the spoils which the Romans won in war, but India did not conquer Greece, and at the closest contact of Hellenic and Indo-Aryan culture the latter had by far the greater vitality and creative power. The points of resemblance between the two, which have impressed Western writers so strongly, came from their common ancestry and racial traditions.

The story of the raid must be briefly told. Alexander

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arrived at the Indus in the beginning of 326 B.C., and, profiting by the quarrels of the Indian tribes, crossed over without opposition and entered the city of Taxila, or Taksha-silā, a great centre of Brahmanical learning and the capital of a principality then at war with its more powerful neighbours. Here Alexander received the homage of the local rāja and obtained supplies and troops to assist his attack upon Poros (Purusha), the head of an important federation of tribes in the district between the Jhīlam and Chenab rivers, who was preparing to resist his further advance with a force of 30,000 footmen, 4000 horsemen marshalled by Kshatriya chieftains mounted on 500 war-chariots, and many elephants. Alexander by his strategy effected the difficult passage of the Hydaspes (Jhīlam) river in the face of Poros' army, and with a force of about 17,000 men completely routed and nearly annihilated the enemy on the other side in a pitched battle, in which the desperate valour of Poros and his Kshatriya nobles was of no avail against the superior tactics, mobility, and equipment of the Macedonian cavalry. Poros was badly wounded and taken prisoner, but Alexander, with fine diplomacy, respected the Indo-Aryan tradition that a conquered king should not be dispossessed of his ancestral rights, and after Poros had acknowledged him as suzerain not only restored the kingdom to his gallant foe but added a considerable territory to it.

Having thus made his communications secure and received the submission of several adjacent Indian states, Alexander advanced as far as the Hyphasis (Biās) river, in the modern Gurdāspur district, but at this point his exhausted European soldiers refused to go further. He then retreated to one of the fortified posts he had left on the banks of the Chenab, and there his army was reinforced by twelve thousand fresh troops sent from Europe. Having then made various administrative arrangements with his Indian vassals, Alexander, with their assistance, prepared a large fleet and, protected by a strong army on the banks of the river, sailed down the Jhīlam to its confluence with the Chenab, and thence to the next confluence with the Hydraōtes or Rāvi. Various confederations

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of warlike tribes offered a desperate but ineffective resistance to the passage of his forces, and in storming one of their strongholds Alexander was dangerously wounded by an arrow. On his recovery he continued his victorious progress by land and water until at last he reached the ocean through the delta of the Indus. From thence he began to march his army back to Susa, but the greater part of it, with most of the rich spoils of the expedition, was lost on the way through the terrible privations to which it was exposed in the deserts. Nearchos, his admiral, was more successful in conducting his fleet safely up the Persian Gulf to the Euphrates. The Indian part of the campaign lasted about nineteen months. It was, on the whole, a triumphant success from a military point of view. Alexander added to his empire an Indian province probably very much larger than that which had acknowledged the suzerainty of Persia, but the conqueror, broken in health by the difficulties of the campaign, died in Babylon within a year after his return.

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CHAPTER V

THE MAURYAN EMPIRE

A YEAR after Alexander's departure from India the revolt of the conquered provinces began, with the Brahman university town as its centre. There a learned Brahman of conspicuous ability, Chanākya by name, well versed in Indo-Aryan polity—which included diplomacy and military science—had for his companion or pupil a young nobleman named Chandragupta, who was connected on his father's side with the Nanda dynasty of Magadha, though his mother is said to have been the daughter of the keeper of the king's peacocks (*Mayūra-poshaka*), and hence his family name was Maurya.[1]

Chandragupta, having been concerned in a conspiracy against the king, had been obliged to fly from the court of Pātaliputra, and was at Taksha-silā at the time of the Macedonian occupation of the town. Possibly he suggested to Alexander the attempted conquest of Magadha, which was prevented by the mutiny of his European troops at the Hyphasis. King Poros, Alexander's vassal, had been put to death by one of the Greek satraps. This had aroused the fury of the Indo-Aryan population. Philippos, the governor of one of the provinces, had been murdered, and the general discontent only needed a leader to throw it into open revolt. As soon as the news of Alexander's death reached Taksha-silā, Chandragupta seized the opportunity to expel the hated Macedonians and revenge himself against the Magadhan king. Aided by Chanākya, he roused the clans of the Panjab, who fell upon and annihilated most of Alexander's garrisons. He then marched at their head

[1] U. D. Barodia, *History and Literature of Jainism*, p. 14. Mr Vincent Smith derives Maurya from his mother's name, Murā.

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against Pātaliputra and overthrew the Magadhan king, who was deposed, or, according to Greek accounts, put to death.

Thus in 321 B.C. the dynasty of the Mauryas succeeded that of the Nandas on the throne of Magadha. The lesson of Alexander's raid was not lost upon Chandragupta and his crafty Brahman counsellor, for they quickly followed up their first successes by compelling or persuading all the smaller states of Northern India to acknowledge the suzerainty of Magadha, so that in a few years' time Chandragupta's empire stretched from sea to sea and Āryāvarta, instead of being torn asunder by the dissensions and rivalries of numerous tribal confederations, was united under a strong central government, and could present an unbroken front to any foreign aggressor.

The political wisdom of this policy was justified seventeen years after Chandragupta's accession, when Seleukos—one of Alexander's generals, who had been most successful in the general scramble for the fragments of the Macedonian empire which had followed upon the death of his sovereign—sought to add to his dominions the Indian provinces Alexander had conquered. Seleukos crossed the Indus in 305 B.C., but Chandragupta inflicted such a crushing defeat upon him that he was not only forced to retire hastily, but had to submit to a humiliating bargain, by which he ceded to his Indian rival large districts west of the Indus, extending as far as the modern cities of Kabul and Herat, by way of dowry for a daughter sent to Chandragupta's zanāna in exchange for a hundred elephants. An officer named Megasthenes was sent to represent Seleukos at Chandragupta's court, and his account of India in the third century before Christ, preserved in a very fragmentary form in quotations by later writers, is extremely interesting, and as reliable as such documents usually are in the present day. Some glimpses of Chandragupta's personality are given in popular legends, but materials for a detailed biography are non-existent. His great minister, Chanākya, however, is the reputed author of a treatise on Hindu polity and political economy, the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*, which gives

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a better insight into Indo-Aryan civilization under the Mauryan Empire than ordinary chronicles of royalty.

It must be observed that the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra* and similar works of a later date are compendiums of the rules and traditions governing the central administration of an Indo-Aryan state, written for the guidance of the king and his ministers. They do not, therefore, enter into a detailed account of the self-government of the village communities, or of the tribal confederations which maintained a republican or oligarchical form of government. The organisation of the Magadhan Empire, as described in the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*, must not be regarded as a new system of law or political economy, devised by Chandragupta and his ministers, but as a digest of traditional laws, revised to meet the conditions of the times, and as a plan of co-ordination of the different political systems of Āryāvarta—all based upon the Indo-Aryan village community—for the purpose of national defence.

Chandragupta's government, according to Greek writers, was severe and even cruel. Passages in Kautilīya regarding the punishment of criminals and the torture of prisoners to elicit confession support this view, but the customs of the time and the state of anarchy which would have followed the break-up of the Macedonian administration must be taken into account. Chandragupta, however, was no despot like Darius of Persia. He had won his way to power with the help of the republican tribes of the Panjab, and though the safety of the realm demanded that their turbulence should be checked, Kautilīya strongly upholds the principles of the ancient Aryan constitution and the rights of the Aryan freeman. He treats of the 'duties' of a king towards his subjects, not of his divine prerogatives. "In their happiness lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare." No Aryan, even a Sūdra, must be sold into slavery permanently. Only in times of family trouble, or to raise money for paying court fines or State dues, was it lawful as a temporary expedient, but in such cases it was incumbent upon the nearest relatives to effect the release of the bondsman as soon as possible. It

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was no crime for *Mlechchhas* (foreigners) to sell or mortgage their children, but every Aryan of the 'Five Peoples' was a freeman and had the status of a Roman citizen unless he offended against Aryan law.

Chandragupta's government was a firm and strong one, but not one of military force alone. He had no dreams of world-conquest. His policy, and that of his astute minister, was to consolidate the strength of Āryāvarta, not to create an autocracy after the Persian model. It was a continuation and extension of a process of political amalgamation which had been going on for centuries before Alexander's raid gave it a new impetus. The republican form of government which obtained among many of the Aryan tribes was not suppressed, though in Kautilīya it is regarded as a source of political weakness. Neither were the traditional rights of the village communities or their powers of local self-government altogether ignored in the bureaucratic control set up by the Mauryan imperial government for the purpose of removing the weakness of Indo-Aryan polity, which had been revealed by the success of Alexander's invasion. It need not be assumed that the popular assemblies lost all their political influence because Kautilīya makes no mention of them. They certainly continued to exercise considerable power in later times, and Megasthenes noticed that in Southern India they checked the power of kings, and that all Indians were regarded as freemen. Chandragupta's will may have been law within his empire, but he was none the less a constitutional monarch bound by the common law of Āryāvarta. The ordinances of Kautilīya evidence a strict desire for justice between man and man. Though Chanākya was himself a Brahman, he does not exalt his class to divine rank or exempt it from heavy punishment. A Brahman was not to be tortured, but he could be heavily fined and even his whole property might be confiscated, while for the worst offences he could be condemned to work in the mines—for him a particularly degrading form of punishment. The attention given to hospitals and sanitation, the provision made for famine and poor relief, and the careful regulation of

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taxation are all evidences of the wise and liberal statesmanship of Chandragupta's government.

The numerous regulations and ordinances detailed in the *Artha-Sāstra* were not arbitrary enactments. They are a digest of polity recognized by the traditions of Indo-Aryan government, adapted to the special circumstances of the time by Chandragupta and his Council—a system of government which, in principle at least, is strikingly similar to that of the British Rāj.

Kautilīya declares that villages were first classified according to their size into three classes, and then subdivided for revenue purposes into five more. First were those which paid no taxes—these would be religious and educational communities and others specially exempted. The next were those which furnished soldiers to the imperial army instead of paying taxes. The third class were those which paid the customary royal dues either in grain, cattle, gold, or raw materials; the fourth those which supplied free labour for public works, or, in the case of artisans, manufactured goods; and the fifth were agricultural communities which furnished dairy produce to the imperial establishments.

For the administration of the royal city numerous regulations were made, but villages were apparently left to conduct their own affairs according to Aryan law and custom. There were, however, some significant restrictions. No ascetic other than a *vānaprastha* or forest recluse, no association other than one of local origin, and no guilds except local co-operative guilds were to be allowed in the villages of the kingdom (Book II, chap. i, 48). The object of these regulations was, no doubt, to put a check upon the political influence of religious or industrial bodies which might become inimical to the interests of the State. The ascetic was always a person of considerable influence with the people: according to the old Hindu law-books even the king was bound in matters of difficulty to seek out an ascetic of high repute and act according to his advice. The constitution of religious Sanghas might, therefore, become a danger to the State if they were allowed to exist within the

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boundaries of the secular pale. Their place was outside the active life of the world, in the forest retreat, in the hermit's cave, or in the holy places reserved for pilgrimages. The industrial organisations, such as craft-guilds, were made subject to a similar law in the interest of the whole community. So long as they applied the co-operative principle, which Kautilīya shows was well understood in ancient India, solely for economic efficiency they were within their rights. But they were not to be allowed to become a political power which would usurp the functions of the king and his ministers, or those of the popular assemblies and other local bodies charged with the administration of local affairs.

There was a different grouping of villages made both for economic purposes and for national defence. Among every ten villages there was a central one, adequately fortified, which served as a common market and a rallying-place in time of war. A county or district containing two hundred villages had also its central market and fort, called a *kharvātika*. A larger district containing four hundred had a *drona-mukha* as its centre; while the chief provincial capital, around which eight hundred villages were grouped, was strongly defended by a fortress called a *sthāniya*.

Aryan India had always regarded the maintenance and protection of the public highways as one of the duties for the performance of which the king was responsible, and Kautilīya shows the great importance which was attached to it from a military and economic point of view. The two cross-roads of the village—the Rājapatha and the Mahākala—as we have already seen, were the two main lines of communication between village and village; the former, which ran east and west, being the chief military road and the latter the chief commercial route. The principal Rājapatha, or royal road, of Chandragupta's empire was that which passed through Pātaliputra and continued right up to the north-western frontier. Along these main routes trees were planted, wells were dug, and post-houses, police-stations, and hostels for travellers were built at regular intervals. Megasthenes mentions that pillars were

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set up at every ten stadia (about 1⅛ miles) to mark distances and serve as signposts. Imperial and provincial officers looked after their upkeep and proper repair, the towns and villages through which they passed providing the labourers, who were exempted from taxation. Fines were imposed upon those who obstructed the traffic or damaged the roads.

Kautilīya details many different kinds of roads, classifying them according to use and destination. In the towns and forts there were roads for chariots paved with stones or planks of palm-trees, roads for beasts of burden and for general traffic, and roads leading to cremation-grounds. In the districts, besides the main roads, cart- and cattle-tracks, and foot-paths, there were roads leading to the central villages and forts above mentioned, roads connecting the smaller villages, roads leading to mines and to pastures, gardens, groves and forests, and elephant preserves. Each road had a specified width, varying from four feet for footpaths and cattle-tracks to thirty-two feet, and twice that width for the royal roads and main trade routes. Among the vehicles using these roads six kinds of chariots are mentioned: the car of the god used in temple processions and another used at public festivals, the ordinary war-chariot and a special one used in foreign expeditions, one used for military training, and the common travelling car. There were two different kinds of palanquins, and several descriptions of bullock-carts. Merchandise was carried by carts, camels, asses, and by human porters.

The regulation of water-borne traffic was the concern of a separate department of the State. In the earliest times, before agriculture had been greatly developed, and before the village communities had been linked together by an organized system of roads, the waterways must have been the easiest means of passage through the dense forest and jungle, and the chief line of communication between the principal Aryan settlements. Tradition fixed the bank of a river at a curve inclined towards east and west or at the confluence of two rivers as the most auspicious site for an Aryan village settlement. The holy rivers of Āryāvarta must have been for the

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early Indo-Aryans what the rivers of Mesopotamia were to the Aryans of Iran, and have served the same purpose in their struggles with the Dāsyus as the Tigris or Euphrates in the contest between the Aryan Kassites and Mitannians and their hereditary foes, the Asuras (Assyrians). They were the best military routes and the most important highways of commerce.

No doubt the Aryans had inherited the science of irrigation which they brought into India from their long tenure of the Euphrates valley, and the construction and maintenance of canals and reservoirs had been from very early times regarded as public works for which the king was responsible. Thus the name of one of Chandragupta's provincial governors, Pushyagupta, has been handed down to posterity on account of the Lake Beautiful (*Sudarsana*) at Girnar, which he formed by damming up a mountain stream with a great wall of masonry. This irrigation work, as inscriptions testify, was enlarged and kept in repair for eight hundred years by Pushyagupta's successors under Asoka and later emperors of the Gupta dynasty; but in the troublous times which followed it fell into ruin and became buried in the jungle.

Chandragupta's irrigation department was in charge of the construction and maintenance of canals and reservoirs which were too great to be undertaken by the effort of the village communities separately; it inspected the sluices, measured the lands which had to be irrigated, and regulated the supply of water "so that every one had an equal supply of it"—a duty which in the case of minor irrigation works belonged to the village headman. Water was raised from the canals both by bullocks and by windmills. Kautilīya gives the rates charged for the supply of water, varying from one-fifth to one-third of the produce, according to the system employed—also the fines which were imposed for neglect of the regulations. He advises the observation of the relative rainfall in different parts of the country and in different seasons, and the possibility of forecasting the rainfall by the position of the sun and planets and the different cloud-formations is mentioned.

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The department of navigation was a separate one charged with the duty of protecting travellers against river and sea pirates, of providing and maintaining harbours, ferries and bridges, and regulating all water traffic. Government vessels were made available for the transport of merchandise by sea and river; the department was responsible for their being properly equipped and manned, and in the event of a vessel being lost or damaged owing to departmental neglect the State was liable to make good the merchant's loss. Travelling was encouraged officially, for passengers were taken in the king's ships upon payment of passage-money. Government vessels could also be hired for pearl and conch fishery.

There were both private and Government ferries, and a considerable variety of them. Besides boats suitable for crossing large rivers, and for the transport of criminals and vehicles, there were, as at the present time in India, such primitive arrangements as rafts of timber or bamboo tied together, baskets covered by skin, gourds, and inflated leather bags. Bridges were made solidly of wood, brick, and stone, or were improvised by means of boats or by elephants. The regulation of traffic was co-ordinated with the administration of the criminal law, for the departmental officers, besides destroying piratical craft, were authorised to arrest any criminals or suspected persons, such as a man carrying off another man's wife or daughter, thieves and smugglers, persons in disguise and secret emissaries, those not provided with a pass, or travellers who had no baggage. To facilitate the suppression of brigandage and the maintenance of the peace of the realm, and also to secure the safety of travellers, it was ordained that no one should use the State ferries without permission and at other than the appointed times, but exceptions were made in the case of fishermen, those who were carrying perishable goods such as flowers and vegetables, persons pursuing criminals, messengers, and others. In monsoon times, when the rivers were in flood, and in crossing dangerous rivers, all travellers were obliged to use the State ferries.

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Kautiliya mentions seagoing vessels, both for coastal traffic and for longer voyages to Burma and China: oversea trade was encouraged, both by facilities granted to well-known foreign merchants, and by special rules for financing trade in the Indian seaports. Both river- and sea-fishing were under the control of the department; and fishing villages, in lieu of the agricultural tax, had to pay royal dues at the usual rate, *i.e.* one-sixth on the catch of fish.

Pāṭaliputra, Chandragupta's capital, was planned on a magnificent scale on the auspicious site formed by the confluence of the Son with the Ganges. Like other Indo-Aryan cities, it had a long river-front, extending for about nine miles, with embankments of brick and harbours. The breadth of the city was a mile and a half. Its massive timber walls were defended by three successive brick-lined moats filled with water, and by lofty towers built over the sixty-four gates, as in modern temple gopurams, with several hundred smaller ones between them. The royal palace, which occupied a central position, and was placed in a fine wooded park laid out with fountains and fish-ponds, was described by Megasthenes as being more splendid than those of Susa and Ecbatana. Its pillars were plated with gold and ornamented with designs of birds and foliage in gold and silver, and it was magnificently furnished with thrones and chairs of state, and great vessels of gold, silver, and copper set with precious stones. Excavations recently made on the site of Pāṭaliputra have revealed what are supposed to be the foundations of the palace, and an arrangement of pillars similar to that of the Apadana at Persepolis, whence it has been somewhat hastily assumed that Chandragupta sent for foreign builders to build him a palace on the Persian model, just as in modern times Anglo-Indian builders copy the plans of European buildings. Doubtless the fame of Chandragupta would have attracted craftsmen of all kinds from far and near, especially master-builders of repute, who were always accustomed to seek employment wherever it might be found when royal capitals were in the making. But Indian history did not begin with Chandragupta

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and the Indo-Aryan building tradition was an ancient one when Pātaliputra was founded. The inference to be drawn from the fact that an Indo-Aryan imperial palace resembled an Iranian one in its general scheme is merely that Aryan culture in India and Iran inherited the same traditions, not that Chandragupta was of set purpose imitating the palace of Darius. So great a champion of the Indo-Aryan cause and the founder of the greatest Indo-Aryan dynasty known in history would hardly be likely to celebrate the freedom of Āryāvarta from the Macedonian yoke by imposing on it the intellectual domination of Persia. The *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra* shows that Chandragupta's statesmanship was wholly inspired by Indo-Aryan tradition.

Megasthenes' description of Pātaliputra may be supplemented by details given in Chanākya's summary of Indo-Aryan polity. To the north of the royal palace was the temple of the Ishta-devata of the imperial family, the tutelary deity of the city, and in every other quarter shrines were built to the guardian deities of the community residing in them. The northern quarter was assigned to Brahmans and certain of the higher craftsmen, such as the armourers, ironsmiths, and workers in precious stones. In the north-west quarter were bazars and hospitals: the latter were provided with stores of medicines which were replenished at regular intervals from the Government stores.[1] In the eastern quarter of the city lived the Kshatriya or fighting caste, and skilled workmen whose occupation is not mentioned, together with merchants, who dealt in scents and garlands, grain and liquids. The association of skilled craftsmen with Brahmans and Kshatriyas is additional evidence that craftsmanship did not always hold the inferior status in Indo-Aryan society which European writers have assumed to be the case. It was only occupations which were non-Aryan, or those which involved work offending against Aryan ideas of ritualistic purity, which were relegated to the Sūdra or servile class. Kautilīya assigns the western

[1] Medicinal plants were cultivated in the imperial domains between the ordinary crops.

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4. Northern Gateway of the Sānchi Stūpa

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quarter of the city to Sūdras, and with them were associated spinners of wool and cotton, mat-makers, and leather-workers.

In the corners of the city were the headquarters of craft-guilds and co-operative societies. Other authorities on Indian town-planning tell us that the four corners of a town or village, away from the main routes of traffic, were the proper sites for schools, and no doubt the same position was given to the guild-halls on account of the educational purposes to which they were devoted. Co-operation was a principle upon which the whole organisation of Indo-Aryan society was based, so that the mention of artisan co-operative societies is not surprising. Another section of the *Artha-Sāstra* makes it a rule that a citizen or villager who sent his servants and bullocks to assist in co-operative work of any kind, in lieu of personal service, should take his share in the expense but have no claim to any of the profit. The organisation of these societies was applied to agriculture as well as to trade, handicraft, and fine arts such as music: each member contributed his share of the capital and, provided the rules were observed, was entitled to a corresponding share in the profits. As in the Middle Ages in Europe, it often happened that the formidable power acquired by these societies was not always used for the public advantage and called for the interference of the State.

The four principal gates on the east, south, west, and north were dedicated to Brahmā the Creator, Indra the Sky-god, Yama the Lord of Death, and Senapati the War-god respectively. Outside the city walls, at a distance of a hundred bow-lengths from the moat, were rest-houses for pilgrims and travellers, and sacred groves and shrines. Heretics—a term applied at that time to Buddhists—and Chandālas, non-Aryan tribes at the lowest stage of civilisation, were required to live beyond the burial-grounds. It is significant that the *stūpa*, or funeral-mound, became the most sacred symbol of Buddhism.

The administrative Council of the city was modelled upon that of the village communities, and it may be assumed that,

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like the latter, it was an elected body, though certain matters were reserved for the control of imperial officials. It was composed of thirty members, divided into six committees of five. The first committee controlled the industries and handicrafts of the city. The second one was in charge of arrangements for travellers and pilgrims visiting the city, providing them with accommodation and, when necessary, with food and medical attendance. Foreigners were kept under strict supervision. The officials in charge of rest-houses were instructed to question them and keep a register of information regarding them, to watch over their movements and to see that they were escorted when they left the country. When they were sick, travellers were attended to medically, and in the event of death they were buried and their property was taken care of so that it might be handed over to the relatives who were entitled to it.

The third committee was charged with the registration of births and deaths, the statistics being considered necessary for Government schemes of taxation and other purposes. The fourth committee regulated the sales of produce, weights and measures, and issued licences to merchants. The fifth performed the same duties in regard to manufactures, and the sixth collected tithes on all goods sold in the city. The city Council also collectively administered general affairs, such as finance, sanitation, water-supply, the provision and upkeep of public buildings, fruit and flower gardens. The by-laws of the city imposed fines upon persons defiling public roads or reservoirs, or for allowing dead animals or human corpses to pollute public places. Special routes were prescribed for funeral processions, and no corpses were allowed to be buried or cremated except in the public cemeteries and cremation-grounds. In short, Pātaliputra in the fourth century before Christ seems to have been a thoroughly well-organised city, and administered according to the best principles of social science.

Pātaliputra was mainly built of wood, because, as Megasthenes explained, cities on the banks of the great rivers were

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not meant to be permanent, as the destruction caused by floods and by changes of the river-beds was so great. The houses were therefore built so that they could easily be removed when a change of site became necessary. But from the nature of the building material the risks of fire were as great as those of water. In Pātaliputra a well was provided for every ten houses: no thatched houses were allowed in the city. Vessels filled with water were kept in rows along the main streets and public squares, and in front of the royal palace. Every householder had to keep ladders, axes, hooks, ropes, baskets, and leather bags, and in case of fire in a neighbour's house was required to run to his help—the fine for neglecting to do so being twelve panas. A fine of fifty-four panas was imposed upon those who set fire to a house through carelessness, while the penalty for arson was that the guilty person should be thrown into the fire.

Among other affairs of civic life *Kautilīya* provides for the regulation of the drink traffic and gambling. Brahmans were placed under severe penalties for indulging in liquor. Neither taverns nor gambling-halls were allowed in villages, and those in towns were limited in number and under strict supervision. The former had to be decently furnished and provided with scents, flowers, water, and "other comfortable things" according to the season, so that the lure of the drink should not be the only attraction. Inspectors, or 'spies,' stationed in the taverns took note of the *habitués* and ascertained whether they drank moderately or excessively. They also noted the value of the jewellery and other valuables in possession of customers who were intoxicated, for in the event of robbery the tavern-keeper had not only to make good the loss, but was liable to a fine of the same amount.

Excessive gambling was a vice to which Aryan nobles and warriors had always been addicted. Chandragupta's Government tried to regulate it by a system of licensed gambling-halls and by forbidding gambling in the villages. The official superintendents of gambling supplied the dice and saw that the play was fair. Five per cent. of the winnings was appro-

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priated by the State, and fees were levied for licences, use of dice, and hire of gambling-halls.

The interest of Chandragupta's Government in the prosperity of village life is evidenced by the minute attention given by Kautilīya to cattle-breeding and the care of stock. According to Aryan tradition the land was the people's, but the rāja, like the headman of a village or group of villages, was entitled to a certain proportion of the communal land as his share. The Crown domains included elephant forests and mining-ground, and agricultural land which was either leased out or cultivated by hired labour. The agricultural department superintended the cultivation of these lands and collected the revenue from them. There were expert officials in charge of the imperial studs and herds of cattle and elephants, who attended to their feeding, protected them from thieves and wild animals, and rendered them veterinary aid. Kautilīya lays down rules for the feeding of stock; the milking of cows and the standards of dairy produce; the taming and training of bulls and elephants; the engagement of cowherds, either on fixed wages or on the principle of profit-sharing; the management of the imperial stables; the prevention of cruelty to animals and their protection from raiders and other dangers. Private owners were entitled to the services of departmental officials for the protection of their cattle on payment of a tithe of the produce.

The administration of justice was carried out first by the village headmen and the local *panchayats*, which decided petty cases, and by two kinds of courts, inferior and superior, composed of six judges, which held their sessions in the villages and towns which formed the headquarters of different groups, districts, or provinces. In each court there were three judges learned in Indo-Aryan sacred literature and traditional law, and three experts in local customs and practical affairs. The inferior courts tried cases relating to contracts, recovery of debts, assault and defamation, thefts, boundary disputes, damage to crops, pastures, and public roads, domestic affairs, craft-guilds and co-operative societies, and miscellaneous cases.

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The higher courts dealt with the protection of craftsmen and merchants. The craft-guilds had their own courts for maintaining internal discipline, but craftsmen were considered to be under the special protection of the king, and it was a capital offence to maim one who was in the royal service so as to impair his working efficiency. Other matters within the jurisdiction of these higher courts were measures for dealing with famine and other national calamities. Kautilīya enters into details of the measures to be taken for famine protection. In the first place it was ordained that half the stores in the State warehouses should always be kept in reserve for times of famine. When famine occurred the State distributed relief from this reserve, provided seed-grain for the next harvest, and started public works to keep the people remuneratively employed. The wealthy were called upon to subscribe for the relief of the poor, and when possible the population of the afflicted districts was removed to the banks of rivers, lakes, or to the seashore, or to places where crops were abundant.

The maintenance of public morality and order, the trial of persons arrested on suspicion of robbery, inquests into cases of suspected murder and all cases in which capital punishment, with or without torture, was the penalty, were among those which were dealt with by the higher courts. The sovereign and his ministers, assisted by learned Brahmans, formed the final court of appeal. Punishment for offences ranged from small fines to mutilation, torture, or death. The *lex talionis* was often applied. Torture could be used to elicit confession under certain circumstances, as in cases of robbery when the accused could not give a satisfactory account of his proceedings on the previous day. Capital crimes included wilful damage to a sacred tree, evasion of royal taxes, and intrusion upon the royal hunt. It is noteworthy that under Chandragupta's rule Brahmans were not exempt from heavy punishment.[1]

The supreme control of the administration not only of justice, but of all affairs of State, was vested in the King of

[1] See *ante*, p. 69.

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Kings, Chandragupta, and his Council, of which no doubt Chanākya was the President, or *Pradhāna*. Eight seems to have been the usual number of a royal council, but it varied from time to time, and in Chandragupta's great empire it was probably larger as the duties of the Council were onerous. Individually each member, assisted by two under-secretaries, was in charge of a State department. Collectively the Council met to discuss departmental finances, foreign affairs, and all other important matters, sometimes with, sometimes without the presence of the sovereign. They appointed provincial governors, departmental chiefs, and all the highest officers of State. The Council generally initiated all important business, the opinion of absent members being given in writing. The resolutions of the Council were signed and sealed by each member in order of precedence. Megasthenes testified to the "high character and wisdom" of Chandragupta's councillors and to the power they held in the State. Chandragupta's rule was not the undiluted despotism of an absolute monarchy, but a constitutional government formed after the ancient Aryan tradition of empire, in which, theoretically at least, the people's right was the only source of the divine right of kings. This principle was asserted in the oath which every Indo-Aryan king took at the religious ceremony in which he received royal authority from the people's hands: "May I be deprived of heaven, of life, and of offspring if I oppress you." [1]

According to the same tradition the king's duties and daily routine of work were clearly defined. Every twenty-four hours was to be divided into sixteen *nālikās*, or periods of about one and a half hours. The first nālikā of the day was to be given to the State finances and consideration of national defence. In the second the king was to attend to the petitions and suits of his subjects. The third was the time for bathing, dining, and religious study. In the fourth he received payments for the royal treasury and made official appointments. The fifth

[1] *Aitareya Brahmana*, vol. viii, 4.1.15. See "Introduction to Hindu Polity," by Kashiprasad Jayaswal, *Modern Review*, Calcutta, July 1913.

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was devoted to Council business and to receiving the reports of spies; the sixth to relaxation and prayer; the seventh and eighth to military matters. In the first nālikā of the night he again received reports from officers of the secret service; the second was given to the evening bath, repast, and study; the third, fourth, and fifth were the hours for sleep. In the sixth he arose, prepared himself for the coming day by meditation, and was received by his bodyguard of female archers. The seventh was given to the study of public affairs and to issuing orders to his secret agents. In the eighth he went into the private audience hall, where he received the blessings of his guru and other Brahmans of the court and met his councillors and the royal princes. Some religious ceremonies were then performed, and after consultation with the court astrologer, physician, and head cook, the day's work began. In the reign of Chandragupta's grandson Asoka, we learn that a water-clock at the great university of Nālanda gave time for the whole of Magadha.

The function of the secret agents, who according to established tradition were part of the machinery of government, combined that of the modern journalist, inspecting official, police detective, and military spy. They were to keep the Government informed of the state of public opinion, to report confidentially upon the working of departmental administrations, to impose a check upon the arbitrary conduct of State officials, to assist in the detection of crime, as well as to frustrate seditious movements and to discover the designs of an enemy country. "A king worthy of praise," says the *Sukrā-nitisāra, à propos* of spies, "should always learn his own faults from his subjects' point of view and get rid of them, but never punish the people" (chap. i, p. 265). In principle, at least, the ancient spy system had much to recommend it and stood on a far higher moral plane than that of the present day. Greek accounts which bear witness to Indian honesty and veracity declare that Chandragupta was well served by his secret agents and that their reports could always be considered trustworthy.

Greek writers also give some glimpses of the life of Chandra-

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gupta, borrowed from Megasthenes' descriptions. The drastic measures taken for the consolidation of the Empire must have made the Mauryan dynasty many enemies, and for fear of attempts against his life Chandragupta is said to have changed his bedroom every night. The fact that he refrained from sleeping in the daytime need not have been attributed to the same cause, for it only proved that he observed the rules of morality laid down in Brahmanical law-books. When the Emperor rode abroad it was a capital offence to approach close to the bodyguard of female archers which protected his person. In the city he was sometimes carried in a pálanquin of gold festooned with pearls, but on his travels Chandragupta rode either on horseback or on an elephant magnificently caparisoned. When he sat in the public audience hall of the palace, clothed 'in purple and fine linen,' to hear the petitions and appeals of his subjects, four attendants massaged his limbs with ebony rollers. One of the most splendid of the court functions was the celebration of the Emperor's birthday, when, according to an ancient Aryan custom, his hair was washed in the presence of the court, and the attendant princes and nobles of the Empire brought rich presents to their sovereign. Displays of arms of Kshatriya chivalry; rhinoceros, elephant, ram, and bull fights; chariot-racing with horses and oxen yoked together, and hunting, were the principal amusements of the court.

Both Chandragupta and his minister Chanākya are said to have favoured the followers of Mahāvīra,[1] who, though unorthodox in the Brahmanical sense, did not make so wide a breach in the Vedic tradition by disputing the existence of the soul, a sin for which the Buddhists in Chandragupta's time seem to have been classed as heretics and placed outside the Aryan pale. But it does not follow that Chandragupta was himself of the Jain persuasion because he bestowed imperial bounty upon Mahāvīra's followers, for it was the recognised duty of an Indo-Aryan monarch to be generous towards all religious devotees, even the unorthodox, provided that their

[1] U. D. Barodia, *History and Literature of Jainism.*

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doctrines did not subvert the whole foundation of Aryan religion.

The imperial revenue was derived from many sources. Besides the ordinary tax of one-sixth of the produce of communal lands or of fisheries, which was the rāja's due according to the oldest Aryan tradition, there was the revenue from the Crown domains; from the working and leasing of mines, pearl fisheries and salt manufacture, which were State monopolies; the hire of Government ships and boats; irrigation assessments; tolls on merchandise; taxes on liquor and gambling-houses; fees for passports and for testing weights and measures; and fines imposed for various offences.

The system of collecting the land revenue followed the organisation of the village communities previously described. The headman, or *gopa* (lit. cowherd), of each of the smaller groups of villages was responsible for keeping a register of householders and their lands, which gave their occupations, caste, income, and property in servants and live-stock, and the amount of the tax payable, whether in money or kind, if they were not exempt from taxation, or the State service for which they were liable in lieu of taxes. The *sthānika*, or mayor, of the district towns had under him a staff of revenue officials who performed similar duties for the larger groups of villages and townships; while a higher officer acted in the same way as revenue-collector for the fortified provincial capitals, the State mines, gardens and forests, and for the tolls on traffic. A Collector of Customs was posted at the gates of fortified towns with an office staff to register the merchants and their goods which passed through and to examine passports. The markets were just inside the gates, and the duties were levied only on the actual sales. Certain kinds of goods, such as arms and armour, metals, vehicles, grain, live-stock, and precious stones, were exempt from duty and were therefore offered for sale outside the gates. No duty was levied on articles intended for religious purposes or for marriage festivals, or on presents for the king, Government stores, and anything to be used for women in childbirth.

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Double duty was charged to a merchant coming without a pass, and eight times the amount if the pass was found to be forged, while very heavy fines were imposed for smuggling.

The revenue received from these recognised sources was not always sufficient for the State expenditure, and Chandragupta and his ministers were sometimes driven to various financial shifts to meet great emergencies—one of which, no doubt, was the defence of the realm against Seleukos' invasion. Thus it is said that special appeals were made for the people's 'benevolences' to replenish the State finances, that the rich stores of gold in the temple treasuries were drawn upon, and that eight hundred million debased silver coins were issued from the imperial mint; but though Kautilīya proposes various extraordinary and irregular means of raising revenue, there is no suggestion that such measures lay within the divine right of kings, or were justified by any circumstances save the common weal and grave dangers threatening the existence of the State.

If Chandragupta's hand lay heavy upon his subjects, there is no evidence except that of prejudiced Greek writers that his government was deliberately oppressive. His justification lay in his success in freeing Āryāvarta from the Macedonian yoke, an autocracy which would have been far less tender with the rights of Aryan freemen. Popular legends represent him as the Indian King Alfred who in the face of great difficulties struggled successfully to free his country from the vicious rule of the Nanda kings and from the yoke of the foreign invader. Chanākya was ugly and deformed, but an accomplished scholar and a great statesman, who served his master faithfully with the wisdom of a serpent, which prevailed over all the wiles of his enemies and made the Magadhan Empire the greatest and most glorious Āryāvarta had ever known.

The organisation of Chandragupta's army followed the Indo-Aryan tradition of warfare. After his succession to the throne of Magadha it is said to have numbered six hundred thousand infantry, swordsmen, and archers; thirty thousand cavalry; over eight thousand chariots drawn by two or four

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horses and holding two warriors each; and nine thousand elephants each seating three bowmen. Chandragupta had also an effective navy, the details of which are not recorded, though Kautilīya mentions ocean-going ships as well as vessels for coast and river service. The administration of the army and navy was, like that of the imperial capital, under a commission of thirty members divided into six *panchayats*, or councils of five. The first controlled the navy; the second the army transport and commissariat services; the third the infantry; the fourth the cavalry; the fifth the war-chariots; and the sixth the elephant force.

Chandragupta reigned twenty-four years and died in 296 B.C., probably before the age of fifty. He left to his son Bindusāra a great and powerful empire which kept the foreign invader at bay for a century after his death. Bindusāra, while he was *Yuva-rāja*, or Crown Prince, had no doubt been trained in the art of war and, according to Aryan custom, taken a leading part in the proceedings of the imperial Council—his place being after that of the Purohita, the Royal Chaplain or highest Lord Spiritual. He was thus well qualified to carry on his father's policy, both in military and civil matters, and to maintain the respect which the Mauryan dynasty had won both at home and abroad. But so far as is known his reign of twenty-five years was uneventful and he left no mark of a strong personality upon the records of the time, unless the extension of the Mauryan Empire in a southerly direction to the latitude of Madras, so as to include the whole of the Dekhan, is to be attributed to him, as Mr Vincent Smith believes.

Beyond this the only known events of his reign are the despatch by Antiochos, Seleukos' son and successor, of a new embassy, headed by Deïmachos, to represent him at the court of Pātaliputra instead of the one of which Megasthenes was the leader; and of a similar one by the ruler of Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus, of which Dionysios was the chief. The latter, like Megasthenes, left written accounts of his impressions of India. We need not infer that these diplomatic missions marked the beginning of a close intercourse between India,

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Mesopotamia, and Egypt, but only that the prestige of the Mauryan dynasty was so great that the Western Powers thought it worth while to recognise it. A sidelight is thrown on Bindusāra's personal interests by a letter he is said to have written to Antiochos requesting that among the usual presents to be brought by the Greek ambassador should be included figs and raisin wine, adding confidentially that for a real Greek philosopher he was willing to pay a high price. Antiochos politely refused to make a bargain on the ground that his philosophers were not for sale, but even so slight an incident shows that there was both intellectual and commercial intercourse between East and West at a time when Aryan interests in both continents were similar. The fact is also worth noting that Asoka's father had a philosophical bent of mind.

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CHAPTER VI

ASOKA

IF the foundation of the Mauryan dynasty by Chandragupta was the culminating-point of Aryan political supremacy in India, the accession of his grandson, Asoka, about 268 B.C., and his subsequent proclamations of the Dharma of the Enlightened One as the law of the land, must be taken to mark the final breaking down of the racial barriers between Aryan and non-Aryan, and the beginning of the history of India as distinguished from that of Āryāvarta.

The process had doubtless been a gradual and continuous one for many centuries before that time, but Asoka did for Buddhism in the East what Constantine did for Christianity in the West; he gave a sect which, though already prosperous, was subject to much contumely and opposition, the prestige of imperial patronage and used the whole organisation of the State to propagate its doctrines. Of the success of the Buddha's teaching and the fortunes of his followers in the two and a quarter centuries which elapsed from the time of the Pari-Nirvāna in 483 B.C. until Asoka became a lay disciple very little is known. But there is good reason to suppose that in spite of the hostility of the Brahmans to the heretical doctrines, the teaching of the Kshatriya Prince had obtained powerful support from some of the ruling rājas. Ajātasatru, King of Magadha, the founder of Pātaliputra, was one of those who had patronised the Buddhist Sangha and built a stūpa over relics of the saint. It is also possible that through royal influence his philosophical system had found a recognised place in the centres of Aryan learning, and that the wandering bhikkus trained in the Buddhist schools to preach the Eightfold Path had won many adherents among the lower ranks of

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the village population. The success of Jain ascetics in opposing the pretensions of orthodox Brahmanism would also have reacted in favour of the Buddha's teaching. Thus though in some localities the Buddhists may have been treated as heretics and compelled to live outside the Aryan pale, in others the Sangha had probably become a powerful political organisation which even the Brahmans were compelled to respect.

Asoka in his father's lifetime had served as governor both of the north-western province, of which Taksha-silā, Chanākya's Alma Mater, was the capital, and of Western India, the capital of which was Ujjain, another great centre of Aryan culture, as renowned for its astronomical schools as Taksha-silā was for its teaching of medicine. In his father's court and in these famous universities he had doubtless learnt all the accomplishments of a Kshatriya prince, which included at least a superficial knowledge of some of the current systems of Aryan philosophy. But as a young man his main preoccupation was the art of war, and it is supposed that his succession was not a peaceful one and that his right to the throne was disputed by an elder brother who may have been passed over in his father's settlement of the *Yuva-rāj*. According to Aryan law the reigning monarch chose the fittest among his nearest relatives or sons as the heir to the throne : the eldest son had no prescriptive right by birth alone.

The ceremony of coronation, or royal consecration,[1] by which Asoka was formally confirmed as sovereign ruler of Āryāvarta, 'beloved of the Devas,' was not celebrated until four years after his accession. His famous edicts were dated from the year of his consecration, as, according to Aryan law, the monarch before that ceremony is performed is only, as it were, on probation. These edicts, or proclamations inscribed on magnificently wrought stone pillars representing the imperial standards, or carved in the living rock, furnish the most reliable data of the events of Asoka's reign. Thirty-four have been discovered, some of them only recording the visits paid by Asoka to the holy places of Buddhism, others dedicating

[1] *Abhisheka*, lit. sprinkling over (with Ganges water).

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hermitages for the use of the Ajīvikas, a certain sect related to the Jains upon which imperial patronage was bestowed. The rest are admonitions to the State officials and the members of the Order, issued for the benefit of Asoka's subjects in the outlying provinces of his dominions, setting forth the essence of the Dharma as preached by the Buddha in words apparently dictated by the Emperor himself.

From these contemporary records we learn that in the ninth year of his reign (256 B.C.), or the thirteenth from the date of his accession, Asoka entered upon the conquest of Kalinga, the powerful kingdom of the east coast lying between the rivers Mahānadi and the Godāvari and Krishna. In this successful campaign, which ended with Kalinga becoming a new province of the Magadhan Empire, it is stated (*Rock Edict XIII*) that one hundred thousand people were slain, one hundred and fifty thousand carried away as prisoners, and that vast numbers of non-combatants perished. Asoka expresses his profound sorrow not only for the slaughter of fighting men and the misery of prisoners of war, but for the Brahmans and pious men of all sects and for householders within the Aryan pale, "their friends, acquaintances, comrades, and relatives," who had suffered all the cruel consequences of war—"violence, slaughter, and separation from those whom they love." "Even upon the forest tribes," continues the proclamation, "His Majesty has compassion and he seeks their conversion, inasmuch as the might even of His Majesty is based on repentance."[1] The proclamation concludes with the declaration that in his Majesty's opinion the only true conquest lies in the conquest of self (by the Dharma)—a maxim which finds a parallel in Bhīma's recital of kingly virtues in the Mahābhārata: "A king should first subdue himself and then seek to subdue his foes. How should a king who has not been able to conquer his own self be able to conquer his foes?" (*Santi Parva*, Sect. LXIX, 4).

According to tradition the Buddhist monk who won the Emperor as a lay disciple and afterwards induced him to become one of the Order was Upagupta, mentioned in other

[1] For a full translation of the edict see Vincent Smith's *Asoka*, pp. 129–133.

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inscriptions as having accompanied Asoka on his State pilgrimages to the holy places of Buddhism. The successive proclamations record the gradually increasing zeal of Asoka for the propagation of the Buddhist faith. For two and a half years he was content with being a lay disciple, but in the eleventh year of his reign he entered upon the Aryan Eightfold Path, or, in other words, was ordained as a member of the Buddhist Sangha. In the inscription recording the fact (*Edict VIII*) he lays out for himself the royal Path along which a follower of the Sākya Prince should go—pilgrimages devoted to works of piety; reverence and liberality to ascetics and Brahmans; reverence to elders; the welfare of the country and people; the proclamation of the Dharma and the explanation of it. These State pilgrimages were ordered to take the place of the royal hunting parties which had been the traditional amusements of Aryan nobility. The slaughter of animals for sacrifice was forbidden at Pātaliputra, the number of public festivals being restricted so that the order might be the more easily enforced. To set a good example, no animal food was served at the imperial court.

The duties of the central Government with regard to the planting of avenues and fruit-gardens, the building of rest-houses, the digging of wells along the public roads, the provision of medical aid, and the cultivation and distribution of medicinal plants were not only insisted upon, but animals are specially mentioned as being entitled to these benefits as much as human beings. To ensure that the appeals and petitions of his subjects were promptly heard and that public grievances were redressed without delay, Asoka gave orders that there should be no fixed time for attending to such business as heretofore, but that "at all times and in all places, whether I am dining or in the ladies' apartments, in my bedroom or in my closet, in my carriage or in the palace gardens, the official reporters should keep me constantly informed of the people's business, which business of the people I am ready to dispose of at any place" (*Rock Edict VI*).[1] And

[1] Vincent Smith's *Asoka*, p. 122.

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further, if any difficulty should arise in the bestowal of the imperial bounty or in the execution of orders, through disputes arising in the agency entrusted with them (the *Parishat*), it was commanded that immediate report should be made to the Emperor " at any hour and at any place," for, says Asoka, " work I must for the commonweal."

Asoka also issued instructions for the guidance of the State officials who supervised the administration of towns, districts, and provinces. They were enjoined to regard all men as the Emperor's children, whose happiness in this world and the next was his chief desire. They were warned to be careful in their conduct, for those who neglected their duty would gain neither the favour of Heaven nor of the Emperor. They were to prevent false imprisonment, the unjustifiable torture of citizens, and any acts of violence. In their behaviour they must avoid envy, harshness, impatience, idleness, and lack of perseverance—faults which prevented them from being useful State officials. And that these orders might be understood by the people, Asoka gave directions that they should be read regularly at public festivals and at the provincial assemblies, which were to be held every three or five years (*Provincial Edict No.* I, detached Edict).

To the people themselves Asoka addressed numerous edicts calling on them to observe the precepts which the Departed One had proclaimed as unalterable and true, and to join in their sovereign ruler's efforts to establish the Dharma, " because even the small man can, if he choose, by exertion win for himself much heavenly bliss." This was the Dharma, the Law of Good Living, by devotion to which every one might gain peace of mind, joy in this life and in the life hereafter. The clergy were enjoined to read attentively the Good Law and to meditate upon it, so that the laity, male and female, might be persuaded to do the same. Parents should be obeyed; the teacher must be reverenced by the pupil; truth must be spoken; no living thing should be sacrificed or injured; disputes should be avoided, personal indulgence restricted; but generosity to friends, acquaintances, relatives,

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Brahmans, and pious men were to be encouraged. Those who were too poor to give lavishly could fulfil the Good Law by cultivating self-control, purity of thought, gratitude, and fidelity. Charity must be practised, ceremonies had to be performed, but there was no charity like the gift of the Dharma, and the only ceremony that would bear good fruit was that which included kind treatment of slaves and servants, respect for teachers and for the sacredness of life, and liberality to religious devotees and Brahmans.

"The ceremony of the Dharma is not temporal; if it fails to attain the desired end in this world, it surely begets eternal merit in the other world." But a man must reverence all sects and never think that he honours his own by disparaging that of another man for trivial reasons. "All sects deserve reverence for one reason or another. By thus acting a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people" (*Edict XII*). "His Majesty cares not so much for donations or external reverence as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects."

By a special edict issued in the twenty-seventh year of his reign Asoka made regulations for the protection of birds and animals and other living things. Some were scheduled as exempt from slaughter, including parrots, adjutant birds, Brahmani ducks, grey doves, village pigeons, geese, Brahmani bulls, stags, rhinoceroses, squirrels, flying-foxes, lizards, tortoises, prawns, and queen-ants; also she-goats, ewes, and sows with young or in milk and their young up to six months, and all four-footed animals which were not eaten or otherwise used by man. Forests were not to be burnt, not even chaff "containing living things," and the living were not to be fed with the living. On certain days fish were not to be caught or sold, and no animals living in elephant preserves or fish-ponds were to be destroyed. At other times the branding of horses and oxen and the castration of cattle were forbidden.

Though Asoka was thus solicitous for the welfare of all living beings, in the case of criminals he apparently did little to relax the severity of Aryan law, but used its machinery to

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the fullest extent for maintaining good conduct according to the teaching of the Buddha. Capital punishment and the torture of prisoners to elicit confession were not abolished. He only endeavoured to secure the just administration of the law, and in the case of criminals condemned to death ordered a respite of three days, in which time their relatives could endeavour to win their repentance, so that "even during their imprisonment they may gain the next world."

But "in order to see that justice was done and to minister to the spiritual and temporal needs of his subjects" Asoka appointed special officers, censors or monitors of the Dharma, whose duties were to prevent wrongful imprisonment or punishment, to remove hindrances from the path of the faithful, to help parents with large families and others in distress through misfortune or old age. They were entrusted with the distribution of the imperial bounty and with the supervision of various charitable institutions. Their jurisdiction even included the affairs of the Sangha and of all religious orders, Brahman, Jain, and others. They were likewise charged with the superintendence of the female establishments of members of the imperial family residing at Pātaliputra and some of the provincial capitals.

Nor was Asoka's zeal for the advancement of the Dharma limited by the boundaries of his great empire. The independent tribes beyond his borders were also to be taught the Good Law. He dispatched medical missions to Ceylon and to the Chola, Pāndya, Satiyaputra, and Keralaputra kingdoms of Southern India with remedies for man and beast, and used his diplomatic connections with Antiochos of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, and the kings of Macedonia, Epirus, and Cyrene to spread the wisdom of the Enlightened One.

According to the Sinhalese tradition the most important and successful of these missions was one headed by Mahendra, one of Asoka's brothers, who had followed his example by joining the Order. It seems to have begun work by establishing a monastic centre in Southern India, from whence Mahendra is said to have passed into Ceylon and to have

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quickly won as converts the king Tissa and the whole of his court.

Mahendra, according to the same tradition, was afterwards joined by his sister Sanghamitra, who brought with her a branch of the sacred Bo Tree from Bodh-Gayā, and with the help of the Princess Anulā founded the first Buddhist nunnery in the island, while Mahendra devoted himself to organising the male members of the Sangha. Both these royal missionaries are believed to have spent the rest of their lives in the island, and the great stūpa at Mihintale is pointed out as the memorial containing Mahendra's ashes. The legends associating Asoka's brother and sister with the Ceylon mission are interwoven with many miraculous incidents, and some Oriental scholars regard them as entirely fictitious, but the story of the Bo Tree is represented on the sculptures of Sānchī, which are very close to Asoka's time, and there is no doubt that the conversion of Ceylon to Buddhism was due to Asoka's missionary efforts.

Tradition also is the sole authority for the statement that Asoka in the eighteenth year of his reign summoned a General Assembly or Council of the Sangha to Pātaliputra for the purpose of eradicating heresy, to clear up disputed points of doctrine, and to enforce rules of discipline among members of the fraternity. Several of the rock edicts prove that matters of this kind did—as might be expected from such a zealous and indefatigable member of the Sangha—receive his attention, and the fact that no references to the Council of Pātaliputra are made on the Asokan inscriptions so far discovered in no way renders it improbable that the Emperor adopted this traditional Indian method of dealing with such questions, though the year of the Council's meeting is uncertain.

The course of the State pilgrimages which Asoka instituted, in place of royal hunting-parties, and the holy places of Buddhism which he visited were marked by memorials in the form of imperial standards (*dhwaja-stambhas*), splendidly wrought in stone and inscribed with Asoka's edicts or inscriptions recording the Emperor's visit. Many of these still exist

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in a more or less perfect condition. The picturesque traditional account of his grand tour states that on the advice of his ministers Asoka sent for Upagupta to act as his guide. The great abbot came from his forest retreat near Mathurā, travelling by boat down the Jumna and Ganges with eighteen thousand members of the Order as companions. At Pātaliputra they joined the Emperor's suite, and with a splendid military escort the imperial procession started for the Lumbinī Garden. There, as Asoka's inscribed standard still records, Upagupta pointed to the Buddha's birthplace, saying, "Here, Great King, the Venerable One was born. Here was the first memorial consecrated to the Enlightened One; and here, immediately after His birth, the Saint took seven steps upon the ground." Asoka then did reverence to the holy place, ordered an imperial standard to be set up there, distributed largesse of gold, and made the village free of State taxes for ever. Kapilavastu, the scene of the great Renunciation, was the next place visited, then the Bodhi Tree at Gayā under which the Sākya Prince attained Nirvāna. There Asoka built a shrine, probably similar to the one which now exists at the place, and lavished alms upon the crowds of mendicants—a hundred thousand gold pieces, so the story goes. Then the great procession passed on to Sarnāth, the Deer Park or sacred grove in which the Buddha first proclaimed the Dharma, or "turned the Wheel of the Law"; and next to Srāvastī, the monastery where the Saint lived and taught. Then to Kusināgara, where He passed away or reached the goal of Pari-Nirvāna.

At Srāvastī Asoka did reverence to the stūpas of the Buddha's disciples. At the stūpa of Ānanda, the most devoted and beloved, he gave, it is said, largesse of a million pieces of gold, but at that of Vakkula only a single copper coin, for Vakkula had not striven greatly in the Eightfold Path nor had he done much to help his fellow-creatures.

From time to time Asoka recorded with satisfaction the progress which the Dharma was making, not only in his own dominions but in foreign lands. The gods who at one time

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were regarded as true gods had now, he wrote, become untrue gods. "Owing to my instructions this yearning for and devotion to the Dharma have grown up from day to day and will continue to grow" (*Pillar Edict I*). Yet it is interesting to note that, like the Buddha himself, he did not claim to be preaching any new doctrine, but "the ancient standard of good living which leads to length of days." "The kings who had ruled the land before him had desired that men should live according to the Dharma, but had failed to persuade them. He himself, both by personal example and by State measures, had induced men to obey the Law, and now the Dharma was growing and was increased in strength by obedience to father and mother, obedience to teachers, reverence to the aged, and kindly treatment of Brahmans and ascetics, of the poor and wretched, yea, even of slaves and servants" (*Pillar Edict VII*).[1] There was greater piety among men, cruelty to animate creatures had diminished, there was less slaughter of living beings, while even in the lands outside the empire, "where the Greek king named Antiochos dwells, and beyond that Antiochos, to where dwell the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas, and Alexander [*i.e.* the kings of Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus, and Cyrene], and in the south the kings of the Cholas and the Pāndyas, and of Ceylon . . . everywhere men follow the Dharma as proclaimed by His Majesty" (*Edict XIII*).[2]

There was probably less exaggeration in Asoka's summary of his own life's work than is usually found in royal proclamations. He was using the whole organisation of a great empire—and a very perfect one—which in the hands of Chandragupta and Chanākya had been so powerful as a political and economic machine, not for oppression or extortion, but solely for the education of the masses. And if he exercised his authority in an autocratic manner hardly in consonance with Aryan traditions of kingship, there is every probability that he had behind him the enthusiastic support of the great majority of his subjects. The times were ripe for a great democratic

[1] Vincent Smith, *Asoka*, p. 156. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

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movement in religious thought. The Aryan pale included so many of non-Aryan race that the monopoly in spiritual leadership which the twice-born classes asserted could no longer be maintained. Though the intellectual impulse came from the great minds of the Aryan aristocracy in both cases, Buddhism and Jainism were essentially democratic movements, and Asoka in putting himself at the head of the one and extending State patronage to the other made himself a great popular leader, while he disarmed the hostility of the Brahman priesthood by his tolerant attitude towards all religious sects.

It is significant also of the subtle influence which Brahmanical thought was already beginning to have upon Buddhist doctrine—an influence which was destined to modify profoundly its whole philosophical basis—that Asoka in his edicts constantly refers to the bliss of the life hereafter as the reward of good living—the goal to which the pious strive to reach is 'heaven' (*swarga*), not Nirvāna. "His Majesty thinks nothing of much importance save that which concerns the next world." He often cites the Buddha, the Venerable One, as the authority for his ethical precepts, but the interpretation of the Good and Ancient Law is given as his own: "I have appointed officers among the people to expound and extend my teaching." In making the moral law the guiding principle of life—a law transcending ethical rules which bound human society—instead of the Brahman law of sacrifice, which was a non-moral law, Asoka was reaffirming the Buddha's teaching and also, in a sense, going back to the principles of the Vedic seers who made the efficacy of the sacrifice contingent on the moral virtues of the sacrificer. But in laying so much stress upon the reward of virtue in the next world as the highest incentive for human energy in this Asoka was unconsciously shifting the Buddhist logical position towards that compromise with Brahmanism which eventually made the Buddha the Supreme Deity, the Creator Himself, ruling over the Devas whose influence upon the destinies of mankind he himself had denied.

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But no doubt Asoka in his edicts intentionally popularised the Buddha's teaching to make it more comprehensible to the uneducated masses to whom they were addressed. He carefully avoided any metaphysical arguments which the learned Brahman might try to controvert. The order for Brahman, Sūdra, and for those outside the Aryan pale was the same: "Strive to do good to all creatures—that is sufficient for your salvation in this world and the next." In thus making the supreme power of the State identical with the moral law, Asoka's reign was not only one of the greatest epochs of Indian culture, but a conspicuous landmark in the history of civilisation. And there is no reason to question Asoka's claim that the effect of his missionary zeal was felt far beyond the borders of his own dominions. Recent archaeological research has discovered evidence of the presence of Asoka's missionaries in Egypt, and as no religion can be explained or understood as a disconnected fact in the process of man's spiritual development, it is more than justifiable to conclude that the Buddhist missions established by Asoka prepared the soil from which both Christianity and Islam afterwards sprang.

In India itself Asoka's propaganda, apart from its effect in breaking down racial barriers and making India a nation, had the most far-reaching social and cultural influence. The Kshatriya and Brahman aristocracy had been meat-eaters and addicted to strong drink—the intoxicating soma juice which represented the nectar of the gods. There is little to show how far the habits of the ancient Aryans had been changed in this respect by their Indian environment before Asoka's time, but the powerful influence of a highly centralised government during a period of thirty-eight years and the restriction of the slaughter of animals must have done much to form the tradition of vegetarian food and non-alcoholic drinking which became the rule of the upper classes in Hindu society. And the predominance of Buddhist thought in the universities of the land must have had an equal influence in substituting scientific investigation of cause and effect for a blind acceptance of scriptural authority.

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At the same time Buddhism as a social and political creed contained within itself elements of weakness which after Asoka's death led quickly to the break-up of the Mauryan Empire. The pious inclination of an impressionable people to imitate the example of the Great Renunciation had such an injurious effect upon social order that penalties were imposed upon any man leaving his wife and family without adequate provision for their support, and the prestige of the Sangha withdrew the best part of the manhood of Magadha—the central province of the empire—into a monastic life, so that in after times it was known as *Vihāra*, 'the Land of Monasteries.' Moreover, Buddhist scholastic teaching speedily became infected with the same intellectual vice which it had set out to combat—the reference of every rule of life to scriptural authority, in this case to the word of the Blessed One. The members of the Sangha were bound to the observance of a set of rules as stringent and meticulous as those of the Brahmans. The *Vināya* texts refer all the minutiae of personal hygiene and the organisation of the work of the Sangha not, as the Buddha himself would have done, to natural laws of sound health and self-discipline, but solely to the command of the Blessed One. If the floor of the monastery was to be swept and kept clean it was only because the Buddha had so commanded. The Blessed One Himself had prescribed that the Sangha's permission should be asked for having new-coming bhikkus shaved—so it must be done. The Buddha had shown how the monasteries were to be built; what kind of bowls were to be used; how they were to be carried; where needles, scissors, and thimbles were to be kept, etc.—and there was no other way.

The Master's message to the world—that to worship Good was to worship God, and that good living, the Dharma, led to emancipation from all the ills which afflict mankind, as effect follows cause and water quenches fire—was preached assiduously by the Buddhist missionaries whom Asoka sent north, south, east, and west; but the standard of conduct set up by the Sangha itself did not reach to the high ideal

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of its founders and the obscurantism with which the Brahman priesthood had darkened the teaching of the Vedic seers entered into the monasteries and nunneries of Buddhism. Already in Asoka's time it is evident that the immense stimulus given to Buddhist propaganda by imperial patronage tended towards the development of a ritual hardly less extravagant than the Brahmanical sacrifices it superseded. The forms and ceremonies of relic-worship were substituted for those of the sacrificial altar, and, in Asoka's words, " instead of the sound of the war-drum the sound of the drum of the Dharma is heard, while heavenly spectacles of processional cars, elephants, illuminations and the like, are displayed to the people " (*Rock Edict IV*). But the millennium had not arrived and human nature was not changed by the affirmation of great spiritual truths. The miracle which Asoka expected by his proclamations of the Dharma did not come to pass ; and the spiritual insight which he so earnestly desired to give to all his subjects is less evident in early Buddhist records than extravagant faith in the wonder-working powers of the bodily relics of the Saints who taught the Good Law.

Asoka himself, according to Buddhist legends, did much to encourage such superstition by the most lavish expenditure on the building of stūpas to contain such relics, but we may take it that the monkish tradition often did as little justice to Asoka's character as it did to the memory of the Enlightened One by attributing to him all the meticulous regulations prescribed for members of the Sangha. It may, however, be accepted as true that towards the end of his reign Asoka, in order to gain further progress along the Aryan Eightfold Path, adopted the strict ascetic practice of the Order and perhaps retired from active participation in State affairs. He died 226 B.C., in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, having attained to the spiritual rank of *Arahat*, or Saint, which is next to that of Full Enlightenment or Buddhahood. And if sanity of thought, uprightness of character, and love of humanity can be reckoned among the highest qualifications of sainthood, even the narrowest sectarian need not grudge him the honour.

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Various legends, more or less entitled to credence, throw side-lights upon Asoka's private life and domestic relations. One of his consorts, Kārūvakī by name, followed his own religious inclinations, and her charitable donations are mentioned in one of the edicts. In his old age Asoka lost his favourite wife, Asandhimitra, who had been his faithful companion for many years. He then married a young and vain woman called Tishyarakshitā, who is said to have been so irritated by Asoka's devotion to the Dharma that she attempted without success to destroy the holy Tree at Bodh-Gayā by incantations —a story which under the circumstances seems very true to life. Other folk-lore traditions tell of the tragic end of the young Empress. She is said to have been attracted by the beautiful eyes of Asandhimitra's son, Kunāla, and to have conceived a violent passion for him; but when the pious youth rejected her advances with horror Tishyarakshitā's love turned to hate, and a base attempt against his life schemed by her was so far successful that the young prince was blinded by the Emperor's officials at Taksha-silā. Kunāla, after many sufferings, found his way to his father's presence, and Asoka was so enraged by the discovery of the plot that he ordered Tishyarakshitā to be burned alive and inflicted terrible punishments upon all concerned in it. Kunāla, so the story goes, afterwards recovered his sight through a miracle performed by a monk who lived at the holy shrine at Bodh-Gayā.

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CHAPTER VII

MAURYAN ART

WHETHER in accordance with Aryan royal tradition a great monument was raised over Asoka's ashes by his grandson and successor, like those which were built at Sānchī to the memory of the Good Men he sent to teach the Dharma in the Himālayan region,[1] there is as yet no evidence. But with the monuments of the Asokan period begins almost the earliest artistic record of Aryan civilisation in India yet discovered. With the exception of a few coins, a few remains of stone fortifications, a few hermitages carved in the living rock, and a few simple brick stūpas, or burial-mounds, archaeological research has so far failed to reveal any important works of Indian artists and craftsmen, either Aryan or Dravidian, which can be definitely assigned to the pre-Mauryan period. The fact seems almost inexplicable when one contrasts it with the wonderful record of early Egyptian, Cretan, and Hellenic culture which has been brought to light in recent years. Differences of climatic and geological conditions and the use of different building materials account for it to a certain extent. A good deal is explained by the fact that archaeological research in India, having been until recent years spasmodic and unscientific, has not yet penetrated below the accumulations which thirty or more centuries have piled over the remains of early Indian civilisation. But, as it stands now, Indian art when it first appears conspicuously in the Mauryan epoch had already reached a high state of technical development, though it has not yet assumed the characteristic forms of expression which Indian mysticism gave it in later times.

[1] See Rhys Davids' *Buddhist India*, pp. 299–300.

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MAURYAN ART

The sculptured art of the Mauryan period, as might be expected from the social conditions of the time, shows two very distinct phases. The first phase is distinguished by great nobility of design, a cultured form of expression, and the finest technical accomplishment. To this class, which doubtless represents the pure Aryan artistic tradition, belong the magnificent stone pillars—the imperial standards—which Asoka set up at various places for displaying his edicts. They were also placed as symbols of the Spiritual King, the Lord Buddha, at the gateways of holy shrines. They were derived from the royal or tribal ensigns which at the ancient Vedic sacrifices were set up to mark the sacrificial area, and were no doubt the work of the Aryan royal craftsmen, who, according to the Rāmāyana, held equal rank with the officiating priests, and, as Kautilīya tells, lived in the Brahman and Kshatriya quarters of the king's city. They were in State service, and, like the Brahmans, their persons were specially protected by the common law. At the same time they were forbidden to work for private gain. These were the master-builders who planned the Aryan settlements on the lines laid down by their Silpa-Sāstras, built temples and royal palaces and all those public works which came within the scope of the central Government's functions.

The artistic traditions of these royal craftsmen must have been inherited from the days of Aryan supremacy in the Euphrates valley, and it is not therefore surprising that there should be a close affinity between their art and that discovered in Aryan palaces in Persia; but the theory that the Mauryan emperors imported all their best craftsmen from Persia shows the lack of insight into Indian thought upon which the common misunderstanding of Indian history is based. The symbolism of these royal craftsmen is thoroughly characteristic of Indo-Aryan thought, and the few suggestions of Hellenic and Persian influence are generally much more satisfactorily explained by considering the common origins of Indo-Aryan and Iranian art than by the assumption that the great Mauryan emperors set out to reproduce the palaces of the rival

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Aryan dynasty which had exacted heavy tribute from Indo-Aryan freemen.

The so-called 'Persian bell-shaped capital' of these stately Mauryan pillars is a symbolic *motif* which is universal in Indian art. The label is misleading, for the capital represents a flower and not a bell. It is the mystic world-lotus with turned-down petals so often mentioned in Indian poetry and literature. In this particular case it is the blue lotus of the sky, Vishnu's flower, and the pillar, or imperial standard, surmounted by a lion or other heraldic animal, has the same significance of world-dominion as the State umbrella which is part of the paraphernalia of Indian royalty—for the umbrella also represents a lotus-flower with turned-down petals, as is seen in the sculptured 'tee' which surmounts the relic shrines of ancient India.

This lotus symbolism is more characteristic of Indian art than Persian. As an instance of archaeological misnomers it is interesting to note that the so-called sacred lotus of Egypt (*Nelumbium speciosum*) is not an Egyptian but an Indian flower.[1] It may have been imported into Egypt from Persia, or more probably from India, for it is doubtful whether it is indigenous in Persia. It certainly is so in India, where it is always recognised as the Brahmā lotus, the Creator's flower, which unfolds at the first flush of morning light, when Ushas, the Dawn Maiden, flings open the doors of the sky. The pink petals of the flower are the robes of the Dawn Maiden, while the pericarp is the rising sun, the throne of the Creator. It is thus associated with the very earliest Vedic traditions of India, and it is quite possible that the sculptors who used the symbolism of the world-lotus in the palaces of Persepolis were some of the Aryan royal craftsmen of India taken into the service of the Great King.

Other works which may certainly be ascribed to these royal craftsmen of India are the hermitages with finely polished walls carved out of the hardest granitic rock in the Barābar hills, near Gayā, by Asoka's command for the use of the

[1] The only Egyptian 'lotus' are *Nymphaea lotus* and *Nymphaea cerulea*.

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Ajīvika ascetics. The great chapter-houses and monasteries of Kārlē, Kanheri, Nāsik, and other places are works of the same school of craftsmen in later times, which will be dealt with in their proper sequence.

The second of the phases of Mauryan art is shown in the profuse sculpture of the stūpas of Bharhut and Sānchī, which record current events or legends connected with the life of the Buddha as told in the Jātākas. This is folk-art expressed with the vigour and sincerity characteristic of its class in all countries. It cannot be called primitive, for it often reaches to a very high standard of technique which proves a tradition of great antiquity, but though the same Aryan symbolism runs through it all it is generally less cultured and refined than the handiwork of the royal craftsmen who superintended the design and construction of these Asokan relic shrines. It is clearly the work of the lower grades of craftsmen, classed as Vaisyas or Sūdras, and being so, it is less pure in style: it is expressive of the craftsman's own racial character in combining many non-Aryan elements with the Aryan ideas which dominate it.

These two phases of Mauryan art, therefore, when rightly understood throw a vivid light upon the social conditions of the time and are a revelation of the effect of the Buddhist propaganda in gradually welding together the diverse constituents of Indian society in the time of Asoka—an effect which can be seen still more clearly in later monuments.

Before going further into the history of Indian art it is necessary to consider briefly the fundamental ideas which underlie the architecture of all Indian religious sects, from the most remote antiquity down to the present day. The Buddha and Mahāvīra were not the first of Indian sages to propound a rule of life for the people; for the whole aim of Indian philosophy was to discover a way of living, intended at first for the chosen people, the Aryans, exclusively, but afterwards for all who came within the Aryan pale, and later on for humanity at large. Philosophical ideas always ranged between two extremes. The extreme pessimists preached the vanity of

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all things and the futility of human endeavour, and so found the burial- or cremation-ground the most appropriate place for meditation. Naturally the symbols of their religious faith became the stūpa or funeral-mound, the ashes of the sacrificial fire, the snow-clad mountain-peak, the moon or the setting sun, and the white water-lily which unfolds in the night. Their way of life was to obtain true knowledge—*jnāna-marga*—nothing else was worth struggling for. This cult was most typical of Brahmanical thought, though by no means confined to one school. At the other extreme was the optimist and man of action, rejoicing in the vigour of mind and body, who found the way of wisdom in doing his daily round of work without regard to the life hereafter. His was the *karma-marga*, the way of work, and the symbols were the rising sun, which aroused the world from sleep, and the lotus, which unfolded at the first flush of dawn.

Between the two extremes was the man who sought the mean—the middle way—both in action and in thought. His symbols were the sun in mid-heaven, the blue lotus-flower, which reflects the azure of the cloudless sky; and the places best for meditation he found under the shade of the spreading tree, which turned his thoughts to the mysteries of life, or on a pleasant hill-top, from whence he could survey the world around. His was the *bhakti-marga*, the way of faith, inspired by joy and content with this world and hope for the next.

These three direct ways of thought, connected by many intersecting curves, were by no means sectarian but common to all religious schools. Nor can they be said to be purely Aryan or Indian, for they express psychological distinctions which are universal. At the same time the symbolism which belongs to them is more characteristic of Indian artistic thought than of any other school, and forms the key to the understanding of much that archaeologists have either misinterpreted or left wholly unexplained. It must be understood, however, that no indication of this classification and the nomenclature which belongs to it will be found in Sanskrit literature until comparatively late times; but ages before Indian philosophers analys-

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and systematised their religious doctrine it is possible to trace the gradual evolution of ideas by the study of artistic symbols typical of the different schools.

The earliest symbols found in Aryan art are the swastika, the stūpa, the holy mountain which represents the pivot or centre of the world, and the tree—all of which may be said to belong to the first dawn of Aryan religion, though they were not the exclusive property of the Aryan race. The swastika, which was a sacrificial symbol indicating the direction of the circumambulatory rite (*Pradakshinā*) of the altar, was contained in the cross-roads of the Aryan village plan running east and west, north and south—which, as we have already seen, were terminated by the four principal gates dedicated to the four positions of the sun. The village itself was consecrated ground, the altar of sacrifice being represented by the central platform or enclosure built round the Council Tree of the village at the meeting of the cross-roads, which was also the chosen site for the worship of Brahmā the Creator, the Protector of the four quarters of the universe, if the village were a Brahman one, or of Vishnu the Preserver, in the person of the tribal chief or king, if the fighting class predominated in the village. In royal capitals the king's fortress-palace, chapel, and council-chamber took the place of the Council Tree of the elders and the shrine of the tutelary deity of the community.

Thus the sculptures from the Bharhut stūpa which show the Bodhi Tree pushing its branches out of the dome of a Buddhist shrine represent an ancient Aryan village council-house and temple appropriated to the teaching of the Law, as propounded by Sākya Muni, the Enlightened One. It is significant that the Buddha, as the Supreme Deity, subsequently took the place of Brahmā in the Trinity of Buddha, Sangha, and Dharma, which Mahāyānist ritual substituted for the Three Aspects of Brahmanism—Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva. But by his own caste-fellows, the Kshatriyas, and by the mass of the people the Buddha was worshipped as Vishnu-Nārāyana, the Eternal One. The Brahmanical concept of the Three Aspects was based upon the three positions of the sun, at morning, noon,

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and evening, or the three times of daily prayer, represented by the eastern, southern, and western gates of the Aryan village plan. In Mahāyānist sculpture the stūpa, placed upon a square base carved on each face with an image of the Buddha, was substituted for the four-headed image of Brahmā as the guardian of the four cross-roads.

The stūpa, though of course venerated as a memorial of the dead by all sects, probably did not have a place within the boundaries of the Aryan village until it was adopted as a symbol of a religious cult, as it was by Buddhists, Jains, and by Brahmans of the Saiva school. Its place was in the cremation- or burial-ground, outside the village boundaries and in or near a grove of trees sacred to the Lord of Death, to which ascetics of various schools resorted. In Asoka's time, however, the stūpa had become a universal symbol. It was, like the fortified Aryan village, enclosed by a fence or stockade, which marked the procession-path of the worshippers and was entered by four gates at the four cardinal points. These gateways at Bharhut and Sānchī are stone reproductions of the massive timber constructions which formed the approaches to the fortified capital of an Aryan chieftain, or to his palace enclosure. On either side of the gateways are the carved stone royal, or tribal, standards, similar to those which marked off the sacrificial area in ancient Vedic rites, though the symbolism is adapted to the ideas of the Buddhist cosmogony. The stūpa itself, like the Aryan village plan, was a symbol of the cosmos, the solid hemispherical dome representing the heavenly vault, the mystic blue lotus with turned-down petals which forms the heavenly vault. A reliquary in the form of a Vedic sacrificial altar surmounted the dome; but the precious relics for which the stūpa was built were often for greater safety placed in a chamber built in the solid brickwork of the dome. The umbrella which crowned the reliquary was a part of the insignia of royalty which gradually, like the dome, acquired a mystic significance and developed into the pyramidal 'tee,' a series of umbrellas symbolising the heavenly tree or succession of spiritual spheres leading up to final release from the chain of

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existences. This ancient funeral monument is thus revealed in Asokan sculpture as the principal object of worship for the members of the Buddhist Sangha leading an ascetic life who collected in the assembly halls or chapter-houses of the Order to listen to the words of the Blessed One. It was placed in the apse at the end of the chapter-house, and was either profusely sculptured or covered with a layer of fine white plaster and painted in fresco.

The stūpa was equally venerated by the Jains, who also used it as a reliquary. But it is an error to regard it as a sectarian symbol used only by Buddhists and Jains. As a cenotaph or burial-mound—a memorial of the dead and symbol of Yama the Lord of Death—it was venerated by all sects alike. The Jains and Buddhists only used it to symbolise a definite philosophical concept—that of Pari-Nirvāna, or the merging of the finite Ego with the Infinite. In orthodox Brahman philosophy it was a symbol of Vishnu-Nārāyana, Eternity. A natural symbol analogous to the stūpa was Siva's solitary snow-capped hermitage, Mount Kailāsa, upon the slopes of which grew the arboreal emblem of eternity, the stately Himālayan deodar, or tree of the Devas.

The antithesis to the stūpa and to Siva's paradise in the eternal snows was the holy Mount Meru, Vishnu's abode, which his devotees regarded as the centre or pivot of the universe. With this terrestrial paradise were associated all kinds of trees which from their flowers, fruit, or foliage were considered the special gifts of the Lord of Life, the Preserver. Long before Aryan thinkers attempted to unravel the mysteries of life and death the high hill with fertile slopes had been regarded as a holy place from being used as a natural altar for tribal sacrifices and as a site for the stronghold of the chieftain, who was the high priest of sacrifice. So in Asoka's time Indra's or Vishnu's mountain had from associations of remote antiquity become connected with the Kshatriya schools of religious thought which sought the way of *bhakti*, or devotion, while the Brahman ascetics who followed the path of knowledge as the shortest way to

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salvation found their most appropriate symbol in the stūpa and snow-clad mountain.

Architecturally the symbol of Vishnu's mountain first appears in the great shrine of Bodh-Gayā, built close to or over the Bodhi Tree under which the Buddha reached the zenith of spiritual consciousness, Nirvāna—Vishnu-Sūrya, the Preserver, the midday sun, having by that time taken the place of Indra as the patron deity of Aryan royalty. The curvilinear pyramid, called the *sikhara*, which surmounts the shrine is in its architectonic conception a representation of the holy Mount Meru, but symbolically it has the same signification as Asoka's carved pillars or imperial standards: it stands for the mystic four-petalled lotus with turned-down petals, the so-called *amalaka* or stone finial which crowns it representing the fruit of the flower. In the pillar the amalaka is the abacus of the 'bell-shaped' capital.

The existing temple of Bodh-Gayā can hardly be dated earlier than the first century before Christ,[1] but there is good reason to believe that it reproduces the design of the original temple which Asoka built on the same site. The *motif* of the sikhara, which afterwards became so conspicuous in Indian temple architecture, especially in the north, can be traced back to a much earlier date, and was in all probability brought by Aryan builders into India from Mesopotamia. It appears in the famous stele of Narām-Sin, who ruled in the Euphrates valley about 2700 B.C., which was discovered by M. de Morgan in Susa. This remarkable sculpture records the victory of Narām-Sin over Satuni, King of Lulabu. For the Indian historian it is of absorbing interest because the sculptor uses exactly the same *motifs* which are found in Indian architecture, clothed with Aryan religious symbolism, three thousand years later. Narām-Sin, the conspicuous figure in the upper part of the stele, having stormed the hill-fortress of his adversary, who lies prostrate outside of it stricken with an arrow, is trampling on the bodies of the slain and hurling them down the slope of the hill. The conical structure on the hill-top is

[1] See *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, by the author (Murray).

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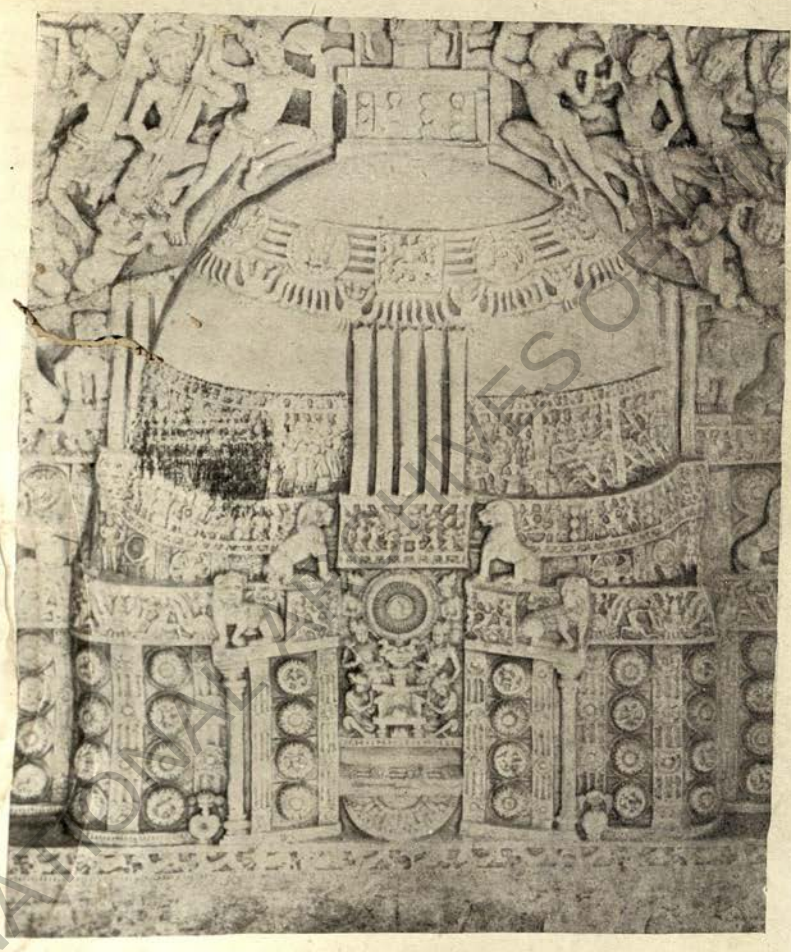

7. Buddhist Stūpa from the Amarāvatī Sculptures

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strikingly suggestive of the Indian sikhara, not only on account of its form but because the sculptor has placed over it the midday sun, Vishnu's blue lotus-flower, which Indian builders represented by its fruit, the amalaka, used as the finial of the sikhara. The inference to be drawn from this sculpture may be that the sikhara was originally only a tribal watch-tower placed upon a hill, just as the *toran*, or gateway of the stūpa, represented the fortified post for the sentinels who guarded the entrances of an Aryan settlement or camp.

In one of the Nineveh sculptures, described by Layard[1] as a representation of the palace of Sennacherib, both the sikhara and the stūpa appear side by side in a group of buildings placed at the foot of a mountain upon the slopes of which the arboreal emblems of life and death, the flowering tree and the cedar or pine-tree, are planted. In this case, as in Narām-Sin's stele, the sikharas are probably the watch-towers of the royal citadel; the domed structures represent royal tombs like the stūpas or reliquaries of Aryan saints in India. Used symbolically the sikhara and stūpa often appear side by side in Indian temple enclosures, but the significance of the juxtaposition and the derivation of it have been entirely misunderstood by Fergusson and other archaeological writers.

The significant point for the historian is that in the ideas connected with the earliest monuments of Indian art, the stūpa and sikhara-temple, one can already recognise the lines of cleavage which separate the two great sectarian groups of modern Hinduism, the Saivas and Vaishnavas; the former, being the intellectual heirs of Brahman philosophy, based upon jnāna-marga, the path of knowledge, while the latter incline to the teaching of the Kshatriya schools which followed the bhakti-marga, the way of devotion and faith.

The reason why Buddhist art of the Mauryan period appropriated both sets of symbols was that the learned members of the Sangha, as exponents of the true Law, claimed greater authority than the Brahmans in divine knowledge, and at

[1] *Nineveh*, 2nd Series, Pl. XVI.

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the same time the popular teaching of the Buddha as a Kshatriya leader of thought won for him the personal devotion of the masses, by whom he was regarded as the great Liberator and representative of Aryan ideals of kingship. The sentiment of hero-worship was concentrated in the bhakti-cult; this we may take to explain the fact that while in the chapter-houses of the Sangha the stūpa was invariably the chief object of veneration, the sacred sites of Buddhism, like Sarnāth and Bodh-Gayā, are found strewn with numbers of stone sikhara-shrines in miniature, sometimes carved with images of Ganēsha or other household gods, but all expressing the same sentiment—the people's adoration for their great national hero, the Sākya Prince.

When the Vishnu, or sikhara, temple—dedicated to any sectarian worship, Buddhist, Jain, or Brahmanical—was not in the centre of the Aryan village or town, as the shrine of its tutelary deity, it had its appointed place at the western end of the King's Road. In this position it had one entrance only, facing the east. The eastern front of the sikhara was pierced by a great window of lotus-leaf shape,[1] symbolising the rising sun and placed so that the first flush of dawn might light up the interior of the shrine, for Vishnu-Nārāyana, the sun at its nadir, was awakened from sleep by his bride, Lakshmi, to whom under the name of Ushas, the Dawn Maiden, so many of the Vedic hymns are addressed. A similar 'horse-shoe' or sun window—which is the most characteristic feature of Asokan architecture, being used as the principal decorative *motif* as well as for practical purposes—was always placed over the main entrance of the assembly halls of the Sangha, so as to throw a brilliant light from the rising or setting sun, or from the moon, upon the altar or stūpa-symbol at the further end. It was a most effective device both from an artistic and utilitarian point of view, for nothing could be more impressive than the contrast of the shining altar and the dim light of the interior of the hall; at the same time it gave perfect ventilation to the sacred edifice. The lotus-leaf or

[1] Or, according to Western terminology, horseshoe-shape.

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sūn window of early Indo-Aryan architecture was the prototype of the rose window of Christian churches, where it was similarly placed and served the same purpose of lighting up the altar. The churches were also frequently oriented on the same principle, *i.e.* so that the rays of the morning sun would fall upon the altar on the day of the patron saint to whom the church was dedicated.

The record of Indian art of the Mauryan period is almost entirely confined to the solid brick-built stūpas and to the assembly halls and hermitages cut out of the living rock. As many of the latter are evidently reproductions of wooden architecture, it has been assumed that all early Indian architecture was wooden, like that of Burma at the present day. That was probably true of Magadha, the central province of the Mauryan Empire. Megasthenes tells us that Pātaliputra was built of wood because the city was in constant danger from floods and the breaches of the banks of the river upon which it was built. The *Atharva Veda* also gives evidence that wood was preferred as building material on account of the facility it gave for shifting the site of a house. A Brahman to whom a house has been presented composes an invocation to Indra to facilitate the removal of it :

" The Builder has drawn thee together, pressed thee together, placed five knots upon thee. Skilfully as the priest who butchers [the sacrificial animal] do we with Indra's aid disjoint thy limbs.

" From thy beams, thy bolts, thy frame and thy thatch, from thy sides [O house] abounding in treasures, the fastenings of the dovetailed joints of the reed [-covering] do we loosen here from ' the mistress of dwelling.' " (*Atharva Veda*, ix, 3.)

Probably the Aryans at the time of their first entry into India and for a long time afterwards found movable buildings, which could be dismantled and put upon their bullock-carts as they trekked from place to place, the most convenient for their settlements. The great primeval forests made wood plentiful, and the sites of villages were often changed in times of drought or plague, or when they moved on to win more

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territory from the non-Aryan tribes. In later times it became a tradition that the site of a royal capital should be changed at least once every thousand years, as the soil by that time became unfit for human habitation. The fact that wood was used for the railings which enclosed the place of sacrifice, and for the carved posts to which the victims were bound, would also give to wooden forms a sacramental meaning. This is sufficient to explain the fact that the stone rails enclosing the stūpas of Sānchī and Bharhut are exact imitations of wooden construction, for they were probably built by, or under the supervision of, Magadhan royal craftsmen sent by Asoka for that purpose. But it is going much too far to assume that craft conditions similar to those of the Magadhan province prevailed all over the Mauryan Empire and that Indian builders of that time were being instructed in masonic craft by foreigners. There were doubtless many localities, as there are now, in which geological conditions made stone the most accessible and plentiful building material: the technical perfection of Indian stonework of the Asokan period indicates a masonic tradition many centuries old.

The Bharhut and Sānchī sculptures bear witness to the wonderful continuity and vitality of the Indian craft tradition both in domestic and religious architecture. The village dwellings sculptured there are of the same type as the Bengali cottages of the present day, with roofs of bamboo and thatch admirably designed to meet the heavy rainfall of the south-west monsoon. The three-storied building described as 'the Palace of the Gods' at Bharhut finds almost a replica in a wealthy merchant's mansion at Bikanīr—not very remote from Bharhut—built recently by a living Indian master-builder.

The shrine adjoining 'the Palace of the Gods' devoted to the worship of Buddhist emblems shows the traditional plan of a Hindu temple, which may be here described. The *garbha-grihya*, or inner chamber containing the sacred image or symbols, is generally square in plan, but sometimes octagonal, circular, or shaped like a lotus-flower with extended petals. This is roofed either by the sikhara—the Vishnu symbol—or by the

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pyramidal tower described by Fergusson as 'Dravidian,' which is a development of the stūpa dome shown in the shrine of 'the Palace of the Gods.' In front of the garbha-grihya is the *antarāla*, a porch or verandah for the priests or custodians of the shrine, which is often connected with a pavilion or porch for the shelter of the worshippers, known as the *mandapam*. The latter is generally supported by four or more pillars and is either flat-roofed or covered by a dome. The mandapam was both the church and assembly-hall of the village or town. All these features of a medieval and modern Hindu temple plan are clearly indicated in the contemporary representation of a Buddhist shrine of the third century before Christ.

Another striking characteristic of Mauryan art is that in all the sculptured representations of Buddhist shrines and of Buddhist worship the image of the Buddha never appears, and the events of the Master's life from the time of the Great Renunciation are told by aniconic symbols or hieroglyphs. Thus the attainment of Nirvāna is symbolised by a pipal tree with a throne or altar in front upon which various sacred emblems are placed for worship. A prayer-wheel—'the Wheel of the Law'—stands for the proclamation of the Dharma at Sarnāth, and a stūpa represents the Pari-Nirvāna, or the Buddha's death at Kusināgara.

The orthodox canons of the Buddhist faith in Asoka's time did not allow the personality of the Buddha to be worshipped in the assembly halls of the Sangha, though probably pictures and images of the Master were to be found among the household gods of the non-Aryan laity. This puritanical spirit was quite in consonance with the esoteric teaching of the Vedas, which had a profound influence upon Aryan artistic expression. "The vulgar look for their gods in water; men of wider knowledge in celestial bodies; the ignorant in wood, bricks, or stones; but the wisest men in the Universal Self." Aryan religious symbolism not only rejected the graven image, but for many centuries refrained from committing to writing the esoteric doctrines of the Upanishads, from the feeling that the revelation of divine mysteries was too holy for any materialistic

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vehicles of thought. It could only be imparted by direct intercourse of soul with soul and only realised by profound meditation. It was therefore handed down from one generation to another, from asram to asram and from guru to chela, the most elaborate precautions being taken to ensure the perfection of this traditional Aryan scholarship. When the language of the Vedas ceased to be a living one, Sanskrit grammar was perfected by Brahman scholars to ensure perfect accuracy of expression, and a wonderful system of memorising was established which extended to the counting of each syllable of the sacred slokas, while the correct pronunciation and intonation of the chants was religiously observed, for a mantram lost its efficacy if a single syllable were incorrect in expression or intonation.

The aniconic symbolism of Asokan sculpture reflects the spirit of Vedic idealism, but at the same time the popular aspects of Indo-Aryan religion are also represented. The Devas, the nature-spirits, who from time immemorial had been regarded as the patron deities of the Aryan community, stand guard at the four gateways of the Bharhut stūpa, and popular divinities like the snake-gods and goddesses and other denizens of the forest, lake, and river, carved with the intense realism of popular art, join in the worship of the symbols of the faith. We have therefore in these invaluable historical documents a most significant illustration of the tolerant spirit of Buddhist teaching in Asoka's time, as declared in the Emperor's own words: "The growth of the essence of the matter assumes various forms, but the root of it is restraint of speech: to wit, a man must not do reverence to his own sect by disparaging that of another man for trivial reasons. Depreciation should be for adequate reasons only, because the sects of other people deserve reverence for one reason or another" (*Rock Edict XII*).[1]

[1] Vincent Smith, *Asoka*, p. 128.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE BREAK-UP OF THE MAURYAN EMPIRE AND THE TURKI INVASIONS

THE Mauryan dynasty did not survive many years after the death of Asoka. He was succeeded by his grandson Dasaratha, a name which recalls that of the Aryan king of the Mitanni who eleven centuries earlier had ruled in Mesopotamia. Even before Asoka's death events occurred which foreshadowed coming danger to India from the quarter whence troubles always came—the north-west frontier. About 246 B.C. Diodotos, satrap of the Baktrian province of the kingdom of Syria, threw off the overlordship of Babylon and established an independent Hellenic kingdom on the Indian border, which was soon to renew the menace Chandragupta Maurya had removed. Dasaratha seems to have continued his grandfather's zealous religious propaganda and relied upon the virtue of the Buddha's teaching to protect his dominions from foreign aggression. His reign lasted only about eight years, and as none of his successors had the capacity of Chandragupta and Asoka for holding the reins of empire, the numerous states which had acknowledged the suzerainty of Magadha one by one renounced the supreme authority of the King of Kings at Pātaliputra, and the Mauryan imperial dynasty virtually came to an end when Brihadratha was assassinated by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra, in 183 B.C., though descendants of Asoka continued to be rājas of Magadha down to the seventh century A.D.

Even before this tragedy the north-west provinces appear to have been lost to the Magadhan Empire, and the dangers threatening the State may have induced the Council of the empire to put the strong man Pushyamitra on the throne of

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Magadha in the place of the weak successors of Asoka; for, though he is said to have imprisoned one of the ministers, an Aryan royal dynasty could hardly have been superseded by another without popular support and the consent of the majority of the Council. It may have been a Brahman faction which put an end to Mauryan supremacy, for when he had established his right as King of Kings by repelling a double invasion of Magadha—one by Menander, a relative of the Baktrian king, and another by the Rāja of Kalinga—Pushyamitra celebrated the event and his consecration as the founder of the Sunga royal line by the performance of the famous Vedic rite, the great horse sacrifice, which Asoka had suppressed.

This was the most elaborate of the ancient Aryan sacrifices, and it could only be performed by kings for the welfare of the State and as a symbol of universal dominion. Thousands of Brahman priests assisted, and they were lavishly rewarded by gifts from the royal treasury. After appropriate ceremonies a young war-horse, chosen for its auspicious colour and marks, was led towards the north-east and then released to wander at its will, in company with a hundred old horses, for a year. The troop was escorted by a guard of a hundred Kshatriya youths, and the king's army followed to fight any hostile forces which dared to stop the passage of the sacrificial animal. The success of the sacrifice naturally depended upon the victory of the challenging army. The rulers of the states through whose territories the horse wandered (or was judiciously guided), if they acknowledged the suzerainty of the royal sacrificer or were defeated in battle, followed in his (the horse's) train and assisted in his further progress. In the meantime at the royal capital the king was officiating at various sacred rites; the court minstrels and story-tellers daily chanted and recited his praises and tales of his ancestors' prowess; offerings were made to Sāvitrī, the goddess of wisdom, and alms were bestowed upon the attendant Brahmans. After a year's victorious progress the horse, accompanied by the subject rājas, was brought back in triumph. It was then yoked to a golden car with three other horses and, after elaborate cere-

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monies, sacrificed with many other victims to Agni, the Fire-spirit, representing the sun, and to Soma, the intoxicating juice of the plant so called, which was the nectar of the gods and deceased ancestors and specially associated with the moon and the god of war.[1] In this rite, as in the stories of the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata, one can trace the distinctions between the Sūrya cult and the Chandra or Soma cult which divided the Aryan clans into 'Sūrya-putras' and 'Chandra-putras.'[2]

Pushyamitra's great horse sacrifice was long remembered in Northern India, and the traditions were embodied in Kālidāsa's play, *Mālavikāgnimitra*, or the story of Mālavika and Agnimitra, written about the fifth century A.D. Here it is said that a body of Yavana, or Greek, cavalry attempted to seize the horse as it wandered on the south bank of the river Sindhu in Rajputana, but that after a fierce struggle they were driven off by Pushyamitra's forces, led by his grandson Vāsumitra, 'the mighty bowman.'

The celebration of this great national Aryan festival by Pushyamitra has been taken by Mr Vincent Smith and other writers to indicate a reaction towards Brahmanism and the beginning of the gradual extinction of the Buddhist religion in India.[3] It is necessary to consider how far this is true and to what extent Buddhism can be said to have been extinguished in the land of its birth. That Pushyamitra celebrated his victory over his enemies by the revival of the great national festival cannot by itself be taken to mean a decline in the Buddhist religion. Nor is it likely that Pushyamitra's persecution of the Buddhist monks—assuming that the tradition to this effect is reliable—was anything but a stimulus to the faith of the Buddha's followers. Buddhism as a religion never became extinct in India, though as a community the Sangha was dissolved and disestablished from the position it held in the State. And if the Brahman representatives of

[1] See Barnett's *Antiquities of India*, pp. 169–171.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Early History of India*, 2nd edit., p. 190.

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Aryan intellectuality took a leading part in the making of Buddhism a world-religion, Buddhist philosophy was equally powerful in the influence it exercised over Brahmanical thought; so that neither Brahmanism nor Buddhism in Pushyamitra's time could have been quite the same as it was in the time of Asoka.

Brahman influence was never supreme in pre-Buddhist times; such influence as it had was won by force of intellect alone. Although Asoka abolished certain Vedic sacrifices and diverted much public and private patronage formerly bestowed upon Brahmans as such to the Buddhist religious organisations, there is no reason to suppose that the Brahman intellect failed to adapt itself to the new position as readily as it has to modern conditions. Brahman members of the Sangha would change their names and lose their Brahmanhood, but it is most unlikely that they lost either their social status or their intellectual influence. The new Brahmanism which sprang up after the extinction of the Mauryan dynasty was not, therefore, a sectarian reaction, but the sequence of a process of assimilation and adaptation which was characteristic of Aryan intellectuality.

It is supposed that Patañjali, the great Sanskrit grammarian and reputed author of the *Yoga-sutras*, lived in Pushyamitra's reign and witnessed the celebration of the great horse sacrifice. We may well believe that the revival of Brahman scholarship at this time was in a measure due to the exact logical system taught in the Buddhist schools. Just as Christian thought in the present day has been led to a more precise statement of its position and to a readjustment of its views by the searchlight of modern science, so Vedic Brahmanism was cleared of many intellectual cobwebs by the scientific broom which Buddhist logic applied to it. Buddhist philosophy, like modern science, recognised no arguments which could not be referred to the inexorable law of cause and effect implied in its interpretation of Dharma. When the Brahmans found that the sanctity of Vedic traditions no longer sufficed to gain acceptance for their theories they fortified their position

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by applying the same logical system to the interpretation of the Vedas, and by a searching investigation into the foundations of their beliefs. Thus the intellectual stimulus given by Buddhist teaching was the indirect cause of the rising influence of Brahmanism in the second century before Christ.

Whatever truth there may be in the stories of the persecution of the Buddhists by Pushyamitra—Buddhist chronicles allege that he burnt their monasteries and killed many of the monks—it is certain that it was not against Buddhism as a religion, but against the Sangha as a political power, that such violent means of suppression were directed. It would have been a flagrant outrage upon the Indo-Aryan sense of royal justice for a king to attempt to controvert any form of religious argument except by the weapons of logic in the public debating halls. Pushyamitra, who had been the instrument of the punishment of the Mauryan dynasty for neglect of the duties of Aryan kingship and had yet to make the inheritance of his own line secure, would hardly have been so impolitic as to start the persecution of a powerful religious community, though he may have punished political and social offences with the severity recognised by Indo-Aryan law even in Asoka's time. If, therefore, there is any truth in the Buddhist tradition, we may take it that some members of the Sangha were concerned in conspiracies against the Sunga dynasty.

Pushyamitra ruled as the paramount sovereign of Northern India for about five years after the repulse of the last Hellenic invasion under Menander. In driving the foreign invader from the sacred soil of Āryāvarta he played the same *rôle* as the great Mauryan emperors, though not with the same success. His empire did not include the provinces beyond the Indus, and probably not even the Panjab or the territory south of the Narbadā river, for the rise of the Andhra dynasty deprived Magadha of most of its southern provinces. Neither did he retain the suzerainty of Kalinga, the conquest of which had caused Asoka such profound remorse, though he successfully repelled the invasion of Magadha from that quarter.

Pushyamitra was succeeded in 148 B.C. by his son, the

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Crown Prince Agnimitra. The Sunga dynasty counted ten kings and lasted 112 years before it came to the same inglorious end as the Mauryan about 72 B.C. The last of the line were a succession of weaklings whose only record is neglect of their royal duties and debauchery; so that it is not surprising that the Magadhan Council of State took measures to restore political stability by putting an end to the Sunga dynasty in the same way as the Mauryan line had been extinguished. The tenth king, Devabhūti, a dissolute creature, was disposed of by what Western writers have stigmatised as a Brahman plot. But the violent measures adopted were probably approved by the ministerial Council and by public opinion of the time as a necessary act of State policy.

Vāsudeva, who took a leading part in the tragedy, succeeded Devabhūti as king, but his dynasty, known as the Kānva, failed to revive the glories of the Magadhan Empire, and in 27 B.C. the fourth of the line, Susarman, was slain in an attack on Pātaliputra by one of the Andhra kings. Magadha then lost its position as the paramount Indo-Aryan state in Northern India for more than three centuries, though as a centre of Buddhist culture it continued to exercise the greatest intellectual influence.

Even during Pushyamitra's reign Magadha was barely able to resist the ever-increasing pressure of invasion from the north-west. Menander—or Milinda, as he is called in the Buddhist chronicles—was strongly established at Kabul, which had been included in the Asokan Empire, and though he was defeated in his attack on Pātaliputra, he, or the petty Baktrian princes who acknowledged his authority, kept firm hold of the Indus valley, Sind, and Rājputāna. It was not until the latter part of his reign that Pushyamitra ventured to celebrate the great horse sacrifice which asserted his right to the diminished empire of the Mauryans.

It is interesting for archaeologists but unnecessary for the understanding of Indian history to follow the chequered fortunes of the numerous Parthian and Baktrian kings who alternately fought with each other and struggled for the possession of the

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north-west provinces of India. After many years of indecisive warfare the political situation in Western Asia was entirely changed by the appearance of new and strange combatants in the arena. Pushyamitra himself might not have succeeded in resisting the advance of the Graeco-Baktrian power had not Menander's attention been diverted by the necessity of meeting another foe on his own north-eastern border. About 170 B.C. the Sākas, a great tribe of Turki nomads, were pushed out of their pastures to the north of the Upper Jaxartes by others, called the Yueh-chi or Kushans, and began to trek southwards. Thirty or forty years afterwards they overran the Parthian and Baktrian kingdoms, and, with the Yueh-chi and Parthian tribes following them, they began to pour over the Indus and gradually established themselves in the Panjab, Rājputāna, and Kāthiāwār.

There were reasons apart from prospects of conquest and plunder which had turned the stream of Turki migration towards India—reasons which make a vast distinction between this and the subsequent invasions of Tartar tribes when they came under the spell of Islam many centuries later. Though Brahman chronicles refer with horror and disgust to this dark period of foreign invasion which followed the break-up of the Mauryan Empire, it is necessary to understand that the political and social conditions were totally different from those which obtained in earlier or later invasions of India. Western Asia was by that time to a very large extent Buddhist. Menander was a pious follower of the Dharma whose sayings were recorded in the Buddhist chronicles. The Sākas, the Yueh-chi, and other Turki tribes may have been among those to whom Asoka's missionaries had carried the message of the Good Law. Certainly in Western Asia they came under Buddhist influence, and the nearer they approached the Indus valley the more they threw off their nomadic habits and adapted themselves to the settled life of Indo-Aryan civilisation. Thus many of them must have entered India, not as barbarous conquerors, bent only on rapine and plunder, but as disciples of the Sākya Prince pressing forward to their

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holy land, as the Crusaders fought their way to the birthplace of the Prince of Peace at Bethlehem.

Taksha-silā and Mathurā, whether under Baktrian, Scythian, Parthian, or Turki rule, continued to be seats of Buddhist learning to which students from Western Asia and from China came in great numbers. And as the organisation of the Buddhist Church was Indo-Aryan, based upon the democratic tradition of the village community, the establishment of Baktrian or Turki Buddhist dynasties on Indian soil did not mean the break-up or a profound disturbance of Indo-Aryan society, but only the admission of new racial elements into the Indo-Aryan pale, and a contribution of new ideas to the Indian religious synthesis. Buddhism did not, as Asoka hoped, prevent war, but it profoundly affected the psychology of Asia and made India what it has remained to the present day, the most religious country in the world.

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CHAPTER IX

THE ARYANISATION OF SOUTHERN INDIA—THE KUSHĀN EMPIRE

THE ultimate political effect of the constant invasions from the north-west and of the weakening of the organisation of Mauryan rule was very much the same as that of the Muhammadan invasions in later times—to shift the centre of Indo-Aryan political power further south. The Aryanisation of the Dekhan and Southern India had begun long before the foundation of the Mauryan Empire, though it was not until after Asoka's death that the South Indian dynasties began to play an important part in the politics of Northern India. According to tradition Agastya was the first Aryan sage who, long before Asoka's mission, penetrated the great forest barrier south of the Vindhya mountain range and brought the wisdom of the Vedas to the Dravidians of the South.

Whether Agastya was a real personage or a name for a new epoch in Dravidian civilisation may be disputed, but according to the Rāmāyana Rāma visited his forest hermitage, and a temple dedicated to his memory in the Tanjore district still exists. The extent of the influence of Aryan culture upon the South is indicated by the tradition that, besides being the author of the first Tamil grammar and of works on Vedic philosophy, he is said to have been a great craftsman and to have brought the jungle under cultivation. Further, he is believed to have compiled treatises on chemistry and medicine and to have written the Silpa-Sāstras which are still used by the temple craftsmen of Southern India.[1] Indeed, Vedic

[1] See *Ancient India*, by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, pp. 5, 8, and 30; and O. C. Gangoly's *South Indian Bronzes*, pp. 2–6.

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philosophy and religion can never be properly understood nor their influence on Indian civilisation appreciated by the methods of the Western philologist, for, though they certainly express the soul of India, they represent the spiritual essence of a great system of national education in all the practical concerns of life, including agriculture, arts and crafts, science, and political economy. It is significant that craftsmen are always closely associated with religious propaganda in Buddhist and Brahmanical history, as they are in that of Christianity. The *stapathi*, or master-builder, is described in the Silpa-Sāstras as officiating at the religious ceremonies which preceded the laying out of the Indo-Aryan town or village, and some of the metal-workers and carpenters of Southern India still retain as their caste distinction the name 'Achārya,' which denotes a teacher of religion.

The beginning of the legendary epoch connected with the name of Agastya has been referred to the eighth century B.C. Whether the chronology is correct or not, this epoch marked the opening up of Southern India to Aryan civilisation, which gradually, as in the north, so completely absorbed the pre-existing Dravidian traditions that though the Dravidian languages remained the vehicle of thought, and though racial characteristics were unaffected, Aryan ideas were the main-spring of all progressive movements, social and political, so that there remains nothing in South Indian literature or artistic record, and no event in its political history, which can be definitely referred to an earlier period.

The earliest dynasties of which there is any record claimed descent from the Aryan heroes of the Mahābhārata. The prehistoric Dravidian deities were absorbed in the pantheon of Brahmanical Hinduism. It is possible that the worship of the female principle in Hindu ritual was derived from Dravidian ideas of the Earth-Mother, but the earliest historical records of South Indian religion are connected with Aryan propaganda—Brahmanical, Jain, or Buddhist. Civilised Dravidian society gradually adopted the religion, including the social and political organisation, of the Aryan village commu-

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nities. Dravidian art and architecture were wholly impregnated with Vedic idealism and the craftsmen referred all their traditions to Aryan teachers. Throughout the Middle Ages, and afterwards when Northern India was almost entirely subject to the rule of Islam, the South remained the great stronghold of the Indo-Aryan tradition in religious literature, art, and polity.

Of the four dynasties mentioned as rulers of the South in Asoka's edicts—the Chola, Pāndya, Keralaputra, and Satiyaputra—hardly anything is known historically until after the decline of the Andhra power in the Dekhan, except that monasteries were built by them for the Buddhist missions which Asoka sent. Megasthenes refers to the popular assemblies of the South as restraining the power of the local kings, and early Tamil records mention that builders from Magadha assisted in the construction of Dravidian palaces—both of which circumstances point to the adoption of Aryan traditions. The most definite facts recorded of South Indian history before the rise of the Andhra power are those of its commercial relations with Europe and the north of India. Teak, which must have come from the Malabar coast, has been found in the ruins of the Chaldean city of Ur. Gold, pearls, ivory, rice, pepper, peacocks, and apes are among the other natural products of Southern India carried by Dravidian ships from the seaports of the west coast which found their way to Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and in later times to Rome. The existence of this trade can be traced back with certainty to the seventh or eighth century B.C., though it probably began much earlier, as it is supposed from the striking resemblances in ethnic type that the Sumerian founders of Babylonia were of Dravidian stock.[1]

The traditional plan of the Aryan village communities gives some indications of the existence of a similar trade by the most important land routes. The Mahākala, the Broad Street of the village, running north and south, was the way of the caravans conveying the rich merchandise from Drāvida to

[1] Hall's *History of the Near East*, pp. 173–174.

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the capitals of the Aryan kings in the north. The Silpa-Sāstras appoint the south-east approach to the village as the proper site for travellers' rest-houses which afforded the necessary provision for man and beast; and the door of the temple of Lakshmī, the giver of prosperity, specially worshipped by the Jain mercantile community, was also turned towards the south.

Of the great extent of Dravidian commerce in the centuries immediately before and after the Christian era—the period we are now considering—there is abundant evidence in Tamil literature, in the writings of Greek and Roman historians, and in the quantities of Roman coins discovered in Southern India. India was then in close contact with the Hellenic world both by land and sea. Yavana, or Greek, merchants thronged the bazars of the Dravidian seaports and royal capitals to purchase pepper, precious stones (especially beryls), and fine silk and cotton fabrics; the stalwart Yavana soldiers, or Asiatic Greeks, who may have come overland from the Graeco-Baktrian kingdom or by way of sea, were in demand for service in the bodyguards of the Dravidian kings.

The Andhra power, which was then paramount in the South, and had begun to take a prominent part in North Indian politics, had its centre on the eastern side of Drāvida, in the districts between the Godāvari and Krishna rivers, the capital city, called Srī Kākulam, being conveniently situated for maritime trade near the mouth of the latter. In Asoka's time the Andhra State had acknowledged the suzerainty of Magadha, and the stūpas of Amarāvatī, the sculptures of which are among the most valuable of Indian historical records, no doubt marked the site of one of the seats of Buddhist learning which received the great Emperor's patronage, if it was not among those which he himself established for the teaching of the Law.

But after Asoka's death the Andhras threw off the authority of Pātaliputra, and soon after 220 B.C., under a king named Krishna or Kanha, they had extended their rule right up the Godāvari river to the town of Nāsik, near its source in the

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Western Ghats, so that their dominions practically stretched across the Dekhan from sea to sea. The next one hears of them is that about 168 B.C. a king of that line aided Khāravēla, the King of Kalinga, in the attack on Magadha which Pushyamitra repulsed; and *circa* 27 B.C. an unknown Andhra king slew Susarman, one of the Brahman successors of Pushyamitra's family on the throne of Pātaliputra, and thus ended the Kānva dynasty. The mantle of Pushyamitra, as the defender of Indo-Aryan civilisation from the barbarian intruders of the north, then fell upon the Dravidian kings of the Dekhan until the revival of Magadhan power under the Guptas.

Though the early kings of the Andhra line thus took a prominent part in the break-up of the political organisation which the Mauryan dynasty had created, they were not, like Pushyamitra and his successors, patrons of Brahmanism, but apparently continued after Asoka's death to support the propaganda of Gautama's and Mahāvīra's teaching in Southern India; for both the Buddhists and the Jains had much influence there for some centuries after the beginning of the Christian era. It was, however, the rise of the Kushān power in the north-west which gave a renewed impetus to Buddhist propaganda and completed the work of Asoka's missionaries in Central Asia, while Christianity at the same time began to build upon the foundations laid by them in the west.

Buddhism in the century before Christ not only embraced a far larger number of followers than it had done two centuries earlier, but as a religious dogma had assumed a very different character from that which it presents in the edicts of Asoka. Asoka's interpretation of Gautama's message to the world was certainly in an Indian sense religious, though it was only a great humanitarian movement based upon the teaching of profound psychological truths. But we must guard ourselves from the error of assuming that even before Asoka's time this was all that Buddhism meant for the masses of the people who hailed the message as a revelation of divine truth, or even for the zealous instructed bhikkus who went from

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village to village to expound it at the meeting-place of the four crossways, where the Bodhi Tree, or a mandapam, gave shelter for the folk-assembly. The history of all world-religions shows how numerous and divergent are the sects and popular cults which spring from the parent stem, even in countries of far less extent and population than India; and the earliest Buddhist chronicles give evidence that the Sangha represented many different schools of thought and many opinions counted as heretical in the Pāli canons.

However acceptable a philosophy of ethics such as Asōka's might have been to their intellectual leaders, it is certain that it would not have satisfied the religious cravings of the people if they themselves had not supplied the element of the miraculous and superhuman by ascribing to the Buddha himself all the attributes of divinity which he refused to claim. Even in pre-Buddhist times Indo-Aryan religion, like that of Hellas, had always given a personal and anthropomorphic character to the popular deities. The Vedic gods were presumed to assist in person at the tribal sacrifices, taking their seats on the places reserved for them, strewn with the sacred *kusha* grass. Formerly, it was said, "men saw them when they came to the feast; now they still are present, though invisible." Theological discussion in Vedic times mainly centred in the question as to which of these gods was the greatest; and before the time of Buddha the idea had been evolved of One Supreme Power as the Controller of the Universe, formulated philosophically in the Upanishads and popularly represented by the Creator Brahmā, or Vishnu the Preserver, whose shrine as the guardian deity of the whole Aryan community was placed at the meeting of the village crossways.

Orthodox Brahmanical ritual did not permit an image of the Supreme Deity to be worshipped; neither did the orthodox ritual of the Sangha when the Buddha took the place formerly assigned to Brahmā, or Vishnu-Nārāyana. An empty throne with sacred footprints or other symbols carved or placed upon it, as is shown in the Sānchī sculptures, served to fix the minds of the faithful upon the presence of the Blessed One, but his

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8. Interior of the Kārlē Chapter-house

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appearance could not be realised except by the eye of faith and by the mystic power of meditation.

Thus it is that Indo-Aryan art before Buddhism had taken root in the Hellenistic kingdoms of the north-west of India shows so little trace of the worship of the Buddha as a divinity, though it probably existed long before that time. The king's craftsmen of the Mauryan period, representing as they did orthodox views of art and religion, would not be permitted to make a graven image of the Buddha to be set up in the assembly halls of the Sangha, though Brahmanical deities are carved on the capitals of the massive pillars of the Kārlē Chapter-house, seated on Vedic altars as of old when they came down to assist at the tribal sacrificial feasts. But the craftsmen patronised by the Buddhist kings of Baktria followed the Hellenic tradition, and were not bound by the restrictions of the orthodox Indian schools, so that already in the first century before Christ the monasteries and stūpas of the country known as Gandhāra began to be covered with sculptures of the Buddha, as the Deity worshipped alike by men and by the gods whom he had displaced.

In the first efforts of these Hellenistic craftsmen to grasp Indian ideas the Buddha's personality is given as that of an Apollo, the Sun-god, either seated in the pose of an Indian yogi or standing as a guru expounding the doctrine of the Law. But the standpoint of archaeologists, following the lead of German scholars, that Gandhāran sculptors inspired Indian craftsmen and created the Indian ideal of the divine Buddha, gives a hopelessly distorted view of Indian history. These Gandhāran sculptures are the crude efforts of uncultured Graeco-Roman craftsmen to realise the mystical conceptions of the Buddha's personality suggested to them by their teachers, the Indian Buddhist monks. The ideal itself had been very distinctly formulated by Indian thought long before, though the sculptor was forbidden by the orthodox canons of Indian Buddhism to exhibit to the gaze of the vulgar the holy mysteries revealed by spiritual insight. The real significance of these sculptures is that they, together with contemporary Indian

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works, show the process by which the philosophical teaching of Buddhism was made into a popular religious formula and adapted to the older traditions of Indo-Aryan divine worship. It is a very similar process to that which is revealed in early Christian art by another school of Hellenistic craftsmen, the Byzantine.

One of the fundamental doctrines of Indo-Aryan faith, accepted by all religious sects, was that of Yoga, which was systematised by the Sanskrit grammarian Patānjali about the second century before Christ, but was even then a theory of great antiquity. Yoga in its literal sense of union was a system of religious meditation which connoted the Vedic doctrine of the Supreme Soul, for it was by means of Yoga that the soul of man attained to blissful, ecstatic communion with the Universal Spirit, and by Patānjali the word was used in the strict sense of communion with God. The early Buddhists accepted Yoga as a psychological exercise leading to true spiritual insight—the perception of the Law—though they rejected the Vedic implication of the Universal Spirit as God and the First Cause.

But the idea of the personality of the Godhead was too deeply rooted in the Indian mind to be explained away by scholastic formularies. Every rule of the Buddhist Church was referred to the authority of the Buddha himself—not to a natural law scientifically explained—and to every relic of his life on earth enshrined in the stūpas raised to his memory was ascribed miraculous powers which postulated his eternal existence in another sphere as the Protector and Ruler of the Sangha to whom the worship of the faithful was due. When, therefore, the Hellenistic sculptors in the first century before Christ began to represent the Buddha as the Deity they were simply expressing an idea which had doubtless been a cardinal belief of the Indian Buddhist Church for many generations.

The synthesis of Indian religious ideas which formed the body of Buddhist doctrine contained two other cardinal beliefs, common to all schools of thought and deeply rooted in a remote antiquity. The first was the dogma of reincarna-

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tion, which in the earliest days of the Buddhist propaganda had been explained to the people, by adaptations of the village folk-lore, in the tales of the Jātākas—the previous births of the Enlightened One—recounting the many deeds of self-sacrifice in lower planes of existence by which the Bodhisattva, or Buddha that was to be, prepared himself for the final victory over the powers of evil in the great conflict under the Bodhi Tree of Gayā. These Jātākas, as we have seen, were favourite subjects with Indian sculptors of Asoka's time, as no doubt they were with village story-tellers. Gradually the world of Bodhisattvas was greatly enlarged by the transformation into potential Buddhas of all the subordinate deities borrowed from the Vedic pantheon, and from the innumerable host of minor divinities which were the object of popular worship.

It was to interpret these Indian ideas in terms of Hellenistic culture that the schools of Graeco-Roman sculpture were formed at Taksha-silā and Mathurā about the beginning of the Christian era under the patronage of the Buddhist dynasties of North-western India. But Magadha, not Greece, was the spiritual centre of the Buddhist world, and the Hellenistic craftsmen in the service of the Baktrian and Kushān kings brought no new inspiration to Indian art. They merely supplied a local demand for images by adjusting the traditional divine ideal of Hellas to the mystical conceptions of the Indian yogi.

An exactly similar process of assimilation and adaptation of popular religious notions had been going on for many centuries in the rival Brahmanical schools, ever since the philosophers of the Upanishads had formulated the doctrine of the One in Many. We can follow the process in the planning of the Indian village, in the allocation of sites to the greater and lesser divinities, and in their orientation. The ancient Aryan worship of the One God, in its different ritualistic aspects according to different positions of the sun, formed the symbolic framework into which both the idealism of the Upanishads and the primitive beliefs of the masses were fitted. The principal places in each of the four quarters of the village were assigned

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to the four greater Aryan Devas, or nature-spirits, who were worshipped as symbols of the four different aspects of the Sun-god. The entrances to their shrines faced east, west, north, or south, according to the quarter of the heavens in which the Deva resided. The lesser Devas, including those of non-Aryan derivation which from time to time were admitted into the Aryan pantheon, were given subordinate sites in order of precedence within or without the village boundaries, and the orientation of their shrines as prescribed in the Silpa-Sāstras followed the intermediate points of the compass. In this way Brahmanical ritual made room for the admission of an infinite number of popular deities into its pantheistic scheme, while the fundamental doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead was symbolised by the shrine of the Supreme Deity with doors on all four sides overlooking the whole universe.

Naturally every religious cult included in the Indo-Aryan synthesis assigned to the special deity it worshipped the position of the One Supreme, but the disputations of different sects and different philosophic schools gradually resolved conclusions as to the nature of the Divine which made common ground for the majority of them. One of these was the Three-fold Aspect of the One, a theory which had its ritualistic symbols in the *Sandhyā*—or worship of the sun in the morning, noon, and evening—in the three Vedas, the three worlds, and in the three Paths by which the Deity could be approached —*karma-marga, bhakti-marga,* and *jnāna-marga,* or the Path of Service, the Path of Devotion, and the Path of Intuitive Knowledge.

Philosophically the theory was expressed by the pair of opposites, Birth and Death, or Creation and Destruction, linked together by the mean or norm, Life or Preservation; and theologically by the Three Aspects of the Supreme Ishvara, Brahmā the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer—a concept which was further expanded into a Trinity of Spirit (*Purusha*), *Sat-Chit-Anandam,* correlated with a Trinity of Matter, *Sattvam-Rajas-Tamas,* known as the three *gunas.*

As the Buddhistic schools gradually elaborated a religious

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ritual adapted to their philosophic teaching, they took for their Trinity the formula Buddha-Sangha-Dharma, called the *Tri-ratna*, or the Three Jewels. The Tri-ratna, we may take it, implied at first only a negation of Brahmanical theories of the divine; but when the Buddha himself began to be worshipped as the Creator it followed as a matter of course that the Dharma, the Law of the Cosmos, stood for the concept of Eternal Bliss or the Eternal Spirit, while the Sangha, the Community, represented the life of the universe. It was then an easy transition from the abstract to the concrete to personify the Dharma as a deity with all the attributes of the Brahmanical Siva, and the Sangha as another with the attributes of Vishnu, the Preserver.

It must not be supposed, however, that these subtle conversions or adaptations of orthodox Buddhist doctrine, which tended to submerge the whole philosophy of Gautama in a flood of Brahmanical symbolism, met with the approval of all the leaders of the Sangha. There was always a strong party of intellectuals who realised the danger and strove to keep Buddhist ritual within the four corners of the Pāli or Sanskrit canons which were the depository of the early traditions of the faith. Asoka himself, following the advice of the Great Teacher, had summoned periodical General Assemblies of the Sangha to discuss disputed points of doctrine and combat heretical interpretations of the Law; and so long as Pātaliputra retained its political supremacy the organisation of the Sangha was strong enough to resist the intrusion of heterodox Brahmanical theories. But the rise of Hellenistic influence and the transference of Buddhist political power in the North from Pātaliputra to Taksha-silā combined to relax the discipline of the Sangha, so that about the beginning of the Christian era, when the Tartar or Kushān dynasty had carved out a powerful kingdom in the north-west provinces of Asoka's empire, a great schism appeared in the Buddhist Sangha.

The popular party, headed apparently by Brahman members of the Sangha, detached itself from the primitive doctrines of the faith and under the name of the *Mahāyāna*, or Great Vehicle,

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compiled a revised version of the Dharma in which the divinity of the Buddha was accepted as an orthodox belief, and Patañjali's teaching of Yoga became incorporated in the Buddhist canons.

As the name implied, the Mahāyāna doctrine admitted into its theistic scheme a vast number of Bodhisattvas, archangels, or saints, who were little more than the ancient popular divinities thinly disguised under Buddhist symbolism and nomenclature. The Mahāyānist propaganda was also specially identified with the *bhakti-marga*, the way of winning Nirvāna by the passionate devotion of self to the Buddhist ideal—a devotion which manifested itself in pious gifts and works of love rather than in the attainment of spiritual knowledge, which was the shortest way to the goal. Mahāyānist ritual imposed no restriction upon the worship of images, so that the representation of the Divine Buddha and the innumerable host of Bodhisattvas gave unlimited scope for the art of the sculptor and painter, who became the most active propagandists of the Mahāyāna cult, in the same way as the royal craftsmen of Magadha had helped in the earlier development of Buddhist teaching—now known as the *Hīnayāna*, or Little Vehicle.

From the first century before, and after the commencement of, the Christian era the progress of Mahāyāna Buddhism was identified with the growth of Kushān political power in the north-west of India. We have already seen how the Turki tribes known as the Yueh-chi or Kushān had followed up others of the same race, the Sākas, in overrunning the Baktrian kingdom and putting an end to both Hellenistic and Parthian domination in that quarter. About the middle of the first century before Christ the Kushans had won supremacy over all the mixed population of the Indian borderland, and had established an empire which as a centre of Buddhist culture brought law and order into that unsettled region, and formed a half-way house between India and Rome on the one side and India and China on the other.

Politically it was strong enough to protect India for the

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ţime being from adventurous raids either from the west or the east; at the same time it challenged the claims of the Andhras for the suzerainty of Northern India. It is unfortunate that the exact chronology of the Kushān dynasty is still a matter of dispute, but there can be no doubt that the new development of Buddhism which synchronised with the foundation of the Kushān Empire and was centred in its sphere of influence had the most far-reaching effect upon both Eastern and Western religion. The Mongolian connections of the Kushān people gave an immense impetus to Buddhist propaganda in China, and at the same time the Hellenistic culture of Western Asia imbibed the Buddhist idealism which so deeply impressed the ritual and folk-lore of Christianity.

At the summit of its power the Kushān dynasty held under its suzerainty Kashmīr, the Panjab, and probably the whole of Northern India as far east as Benares and as far south as the Vindhya Mountains. To the north of the Himālayas it wrested from Mongolian rule the provinces of Central Asia now known as Kashgar, Yārkand, and Khotan. In Western Asia its dominions extended to the borders of Parthia and Persia, thus including Sogdiana, Baktriana and Ariāna, or Bukhara and Afghanistan.

When the Kushans had completed the conquest of Northwestern India the centre of their political power naturally shifted from Kabul to Purushapura, the modern Peshawar, and Taksha-silā became the university capital of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The two names which stand out most conspicuously in the somewhat obscure records of the time are those of Kanishka, the emperor who emulated Asoka's passionate devotion to the Dharma, and the Brahman monk Nāgārjuna, whom Indian tradition recognises as the great exponent of the Mahāyāna doctrine. Whether they were contemporary or not, we may take it that they were teachers, rather than originators, of the religious movements of their times.

There are definite chronological data which help to establish the close intercourse between India and the Graeco-Roman world at this eventful period. Dion Cassius says that Augustus

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received many embassies from Indian kings sent to confirm treaties of alliance, and bringing with them as presents tigers and other animals which Romans saw for the first time. The same author relates that an Indian named Zarmaros "burned himself, after the manner of his country, on a funeral pile, in presence of Augustus and the Athenians." [1] Strabo records the same or a similar incident when Augustus, *circa* 24 B.C., received at Samos an embassy from an Indian king, apparently of one of the Pāndyan dynasties of the South, observing that in olden days another Indian sophist named Kalanos had "exhibited a similar spectacle in presence of Alexander." [2]

It was the great development of trade between India and the West, both by sea and land, in the palmy days of the Roman Empire which was the direct cause of the frequent diplomatic conversations between the courts of Indian kings and Rome. The luxurious habits of cosmopolitan Rome created an enormous demand for the perfumes, unguents, and spices of the East, as well as for precious stones of Southern India, particularly the much-prized beryl. Fantastic prices were paid in Rome for the gorgeous silks, brocades, cloth of gold, and fine muslins for which the weavers of India were famous, and Pliny condemned the extravagance which yearly drained the Roman Empire of a hundred million sesterces (about one million sterling), paid for these luxuries. And while the nobility of Rome lavished their wealth on Oriental fashions, the wild beasts of India, such as the tiger, cheetah, and elephant, brought as presents by Indian ambassadors, assisted in the gladiatorial shows which amused the Roman populace.

It would, however, be wrong to conclude that the mercantile relations which helped to fill the royal treasuries of India with Roman gold and to crowd the bazars of Indian commercial cities with foreign traders had any deep or abiding influence upon Indian culture or upon the religious movements of the times. Mahāyāna Buddhism, though its propaganda owed

[1] MacCrindle's *Ancient India*, vol. vi, p. 212.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. vi, p. 10.

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so much to the influence of the Kushān kings, was intellectually and spiritually Indian as much as the Buddha's original teaching had been. Gandhāran sculpture exhibits the influence of India upon the artistic thought of Hellenism, analogous to that which Oriental fashions exercised upon the contemporary social life of the capital of the Roman Empire.

The spirit of bhakti which moved the people of the Indian borderlands went over to the early Christian churches in Western Asia, and in Byzantium, as in Gandhāra, quickened into a new life of fervent piety the dry bones of Graeco-Roman art. It was only superficially and externally that the Mahāyāna school, centred in Taksha-silā, was related to Hellenistic culture. Spiritually it derived from the same impulse which caused the revolt of Buddhism against the Vedic theory of sacrifice and, in later times, led to the revival of Brahmanism. It was a popular protest against the teaching which made religion the exclusive property of a learned clique, instead of the common spiritual heritage of the people. Nāgārjuna was the Luther of Buddhism, the apostle of the bhakti-marga, who would find means of expression for the deep-seated religious instincts of the masses through the way of devotion to the Divine Teacher, rather than through the dry agnostic philosophy of the Hīnayāna schools. The latter, having accomplished the Buddha's mission of freeing the people's soul, fast bound by the chains of sacerdotal superstitions, was too cold and austere to satisfy the passionate and emotional nature of Southern races.

The name Mahāyāna, the Great Vehicle, by which the new movement distinguished itself, seems to imply that there was a certain exclusiveness, perhaps of racial feeling, in the administration of the early Buddhist Sangha—a feeling expressed in the Pāli canons by the frequent qualification of Buddhist virtues by the term 'Aryan.' There is no ground for asserting that Mahāyāna Buddhism was in its origin a non-Aryan cult, but no doubt the influx of non-Aryans into Northern India gave it much greater strength and helped to spread its teaching over the greater part of Asia. Southern India then became

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the great stronghold of the Hīnayāna school, just as in later times it became the last defence of Aryan India against the devastating hosts of Islam.

The dynastic history of the Kushān Empire, under whose *aegis* Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished, affords many parallels with that of the Mauryan Empire—so much so that popular Indian and Chinese legends seem often to confuse the personalities of Asoka and Kanishka. The period of its greatest power in Northern India—or approximately from the middle of the first century before Christ to the beginning of the third century A.D.—nearly follows the fortunes of the Andhra dynasty in the South. In Europe it includes the time from the rise of Julius Caesar and the furthest extension of the Roman Empire eastward under Trajan to the beginning of its fall under his degenerate successors Caracalla and Elagabalus.

Kadphises the First and Second were apparently the two military leaders whose swords helped to accomplish what Chandragupta and Bindusāra had done for the Mauryan dynasty, first by the overthrow of Baktrian and Parthian rule in North-western India, next by checking the advance of the powerful Chinese armies towards the west, and afterwards by extending their conquest to the east of the Indus. Their achievements, however, only live in the records afforded by the copper, silver, and gold coins, mostly imitations of those of the Roman Empire, which they struck to assist the increasing trade between India and the West, which brought rich toll to their treasuries. So far as is known they took no interest in the great religious movements of the time. The coins of Kadphises II seem to show that he adhered to the Brahmanical school of which the worship of Siva was the chief cult.

Kanishka, according to Buddhist tradition, was also under the influence of orthodox Brahmanism before he became an enthusiastic patron of the Sangha. Like Asoka, the first years of his reign[1] were spent in extending the boundaries of his

[1] The year of Kanishka's accession or coronation is dated by some scholars 58 B.C., and by others at various dates down to A.D. 278.

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empire by conquests through which he opened up closer communication with China on the one side, and with the Roman Empire on the other. It is said that Kanishka, when he began to interest himself in Buddhist teaching, was confused by the wide divergences between the doctrines of different schools, and the chief event of his reign recorded in Buddhist chronicles is a General Assembly of the Sangha convened by the Kushān Emperor to settle the strife between the contending sects. The meeting-place was Kundalāvana, a monastery in Kashmīr, near which Kanishka frequently held his court. It was attended by five hundred monks, who made an exhaustive examination of authoritative Buddhist literature and compiled elaborate commentaries thereon, including a work called the *Mahāvibhāshā*, which was intended to form an authorised version of Buddhist philosophical systems. The canons of the faith, as stated by the delegates of the assembly, were inscribed on copper plates and deposited in a great stūpa built by Kanishka's order, near Srinagar, the exact site of which is at present unknown. The *Mahāvibhāshā* still exists in a Chinese version, but the contents of it are not yet known to Western scholars, so that the conclusions of Kanishka's assembly are still a matter of conjecture.

Judging by the numerous coins of Kanishka's reign it would appear probable that, though celebrated in Buddhist tradition as a liberal patron of the Sangha, the Emperor, like his great Mogul successor, Akbar, really imbibed the true spirit of Indo-Aryan kingship and gave impartial encouragement to all religious teaching, including that of Zarathushtra and of various Brahmanical sects; but as a matter of policy and inclination he bestowed a larger share of State patronage upon the Buddhist community, to which the majority of his subjects probably belonged. Among the memorials of his reign which existed for many centuries afterwards were a great stūpa, thirteen stories in height, and a splendid monastery which he built near his winter capital, Purushapura.

It was no doubt owing to Kanishka's Turki descent that Taksha-silā and other famous seats of Indian learning now

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began to be the resort of crowds of students from the Far East, who helped to spread the message of the Good Law over the whole of the Chinese Empire and eventually, when Brahmanism began to reassert its spiritual and political supremacy in India, made it the seat of the Indian Patriarch of Mahāyānist Buddhism. If popular legends can be trusted, Kanishka's devotion to the Dharma did not, as in Asoka's case, lead him to give up a career of military conquest and to strive for the goal of the Aryan Eightfold Path. According to these legends Kanishka wearied all his subjects by his continual aggressive campaigns and insatiable lust for world-dominion, so that in the end the opportunity of the Emperor's sudden illness was seized to smother him in bed with his own quilt. This is one of the many recorded instances of the fate which overtook Indian sovereigns who offended against the traditions of Indo-Aryan constitutional government.

Kanishka is believed to have reigned between twenty-four and thirty years. Of his three successors, Vāsishka, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva, the first is a name known only from a few inscriptions. Huvishka founded a new Kushān capital in Kashmīr, known as Hushkapura, inside the Bārāmūla Pass, and established Buddhist monasteries close by which flourished at the time of Hiuen-Tsang's visit in the seventh century. There is some ground for believing that Huvishka built a shrine in front of the Bodhi Tree at Gayā to replace one erected by Asoka. The existing temple with its Vishnu sikhara may be Huvishka's work, or a later reproduction of it. Vāsudeva, according to some archaeologists, reigned about A.D. 33; others put his reign a century and a half later. Mr Vincent Smith, apparently overlooking the difference in the dates of inscriptions, would identify Vāsishka with Vāsudeva, as both names are synonyms of Vishnu, the former with Turki and the latter with Sanskrit spelling.

Vāsishka's inscriptions date from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-eighth years of the Vikrāma era,[1] while Vāsudeva's range from the seventy-fourth to the ninety-eighth years of the same.[2] The adoption of one of Vishnu's synonyms

[1] Began 58 B.C. [2] Barnett's *Antiquities of India*, pp. 42–43.

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9. Temple of Bodh-Gayā, Restored

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as a royal title was very usual and meant nothing more than the assertion of sovereignty over Āryāvarta, for every monarch, according to the Indo-Aryan tradition of government, became Vishnu's vicegerent on earth by virtue of his consecration as king, quite irrespective of his race or sectarian predilections. It might therefore be expected that more than one of the Kushān line followed this Indo-Aryan custom, and the fact of their having done so would by no means prove that they were not good Buddhists, for the Buddha as the Divine Protector of the Sangha was Vishnu—regarded not as the 'god' of a Hindu sect but as a cosmic principle recognised by all schools of Indian philosophy. The understanding of this fundamental fact will obviate many misconceptions of Indian history.

The important fact which emerges from the fragmentary historical data of the Kushān Empire is that both in religion and in principles of government the Turki monarchs were, like the greatest of the Mogul dynasty, thoroughly Aryanised, and could not therefore have regarded themselves as despotic and irresponsible rulers of a conquered people. And to this cause the historian should not hesitate to ascribe the fact that Kanishka's line maintained an unbroken supremacy in Northern India for nearly three centuries.

While Indo-Aryan culture was thus spreading itself over the highlands of Western and Central Asia it was also penetrating into the southern regions of the continent by way of sea. The development of India's maritime trade brought her into close connection with Burma, Siam, Java, and Kambodia, and according to local traditions the first century of the Christian era saw the beginning of those great colonising enterprises which subsequently built up the magnificent monuments of Indo-Aryan civilisation which now remain in Prambānam and Borobudur in Java, and near to the deserted capitals of the kings of Kambodia. As in Southern India and Ceylon, it was Brahmanical teaching which preceded and prepared the way for the spread of Buddhistic doctrine.

That Mahāyāna Buddhism was a revolt against the austerity of the earlier Buddhist schools is indicated by all the monu-

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ments of the Kushān period in India. The sculptors of the Gandhāran monasteries revelled in a profuse elaboration of statuary and ornament, and their influence was soon felt in the architecture of the Hīnayāna schools, which gradually lost the grave simplicity and restraint of its earlier style and began to imitate the rich carving and elaborate symbolism of the more popular cult. The principal artistic monuments of the period now remaining, outside those of the Gandhāra school, are the temple of Bodh-Gayā, the later sculptures of Amarāvatī, the Nāsik monasteries and some of the college halls and chapels which occupy the centre of Siva's bow at Ajantā,[1] and the great Assembly Hall at Kanheri, near Bombay. There are besides numerous smaller rock-cut assembly halls and monasteries in other parts of India. Geographically, however, most of these were outside the Kushān dominions, and the work of Indian craftsmen who owe nothing to Hellenistic art traditions. They nearly all come within the territory of the later Andhra kings, of whose personality even less is known than of that of the contemporary Kushān rulers. These artistic records prove that during this period, though the Brahman intellect was slowly reshaping the doctrines of Buddhism, the wonderful organisation of the Sangha which Asoka had built up maintained sufficient political power both in Northern India and the Dekhan to appropriate the lion's share of State patronage and prevent the Brahmans outside the Sangha from asserting their priestly authority.

[1] See *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, by the author, p. 143 (Murray, 1915).

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CHAPTER X

THE GUPTA EMPIRE

ABOUT a century after the extinction of the Kushān and Andhra dynasties the centre of political interest is again shifted to Pātaliputra, and the great Gupta era, characterised by Western writers as the period of Hindu or Brahmanical revival, begins. The intervening century, from about A.D. 220 to 320, is an obscure period of which practically nothing is known except that the Kushān and Andhra Empires collapsed and apparently broke up into a number of smaller states ruled by rājas who were perhaps contented with the happiness of their subjects and had no ambition to live in history as mighty war-lords. In any case their military exploits were not considerable enough to leave an impression upon Indian history.

It is well to consider at the outset how far the description of the Gupta era as the beginning of a Brahmanical reaction is an accurate analysis of the psychological and political changes which then took place in India. The principal evidence upon which Oriental scholars have relied is that of the epigraphical records, which show that until the second or third century A.D. practically all royal and private benevolences were bestowed upon Jain and Buddhist institutions, and that patronage of Brahmans, as such, and of Brahmanical deities did not begin until after that time. It might therefore be assumed that the effect of Asoka's propaganda was to reduce Brahman influence to a very low ebb for many centuries, and that it was not until the beginning of the Gupta era that the Brahmans regained the position they had held as exponents of Indo-Aryan culture.

But on the other hand the artistic records which explain

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and amplify the epigraphical evidence show very clearly that this is a quite untrue reading of Indian history. Throughout the whole of this period Brahman influence was steadily growing, intellectually, socially, and politically. Even many of the Buddha's disciples were Brahmans who changed their names upon initiation as members of the Sangha, in the same way as Christians dropped their pagan names upon baptism. Already in Asoka's time the Brahmans had probably captured the whole machinery of the Sangha as effectually as in modern times they have controlled the inner working of British departmental machinery. A similar situation obtained in the world of religious thought represented by Brahmanism. Brahmanical or Vedic sacrificial ritual was transformed or swept away, but the ideas behind it remained as the nucleus of a new spiritual growth. The Vedic gods were pressed into the service of the Sangha and made subordinate to the divine Buddha, or under other names joined the great assembly of Buddhist saints, the Buddhas that were to be; but the nature-powers they represented were worshipped as before, and the philosophical concepts connected with them were accepted as the basis of Buddhistic systems.

And during all this time Brahmanism retained its independent existence as a side channel of the great stream of popular religion, and within its forest asrams the basic ideas which formed the two great divisions of modern Hinduism were slowly maturing. It was after the disinterested labours of Brahman scholars in this period of seclusion had thoroughly examined the foundations of Vedic religion, and after the coarse materialism of Vedic ritual had been purged of its grossness by Buddhist idealism, that the religion of the Vedas reunited with the main current of Indo-Aryan beliefs, and the Brahmans resumed their natural position as the interpreters of Indo-Aryan religion, as distinguished from the dogmas of the Buddhist and Jain orders. Buddhism, deprived of the intellectual support of the Aryan aristocracy, then gradually relapsed into the position it had held at the beginning. It became one of the many sects of Hinduism instead of a syn-

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thesis of all of them, and finally in India attained the goal of Pari-Nirvāna by being merged in the ocean of Indian thought.

The movement which the Gupta era ushered in was, however, more of a national revival, or a reassertion of Aryan intellectual and political supremacy, than a religious one. It had its centre of inspiration in a federation of the pure-blooded Aryan clans, among them the Lichchavi, whose nobility had been known in the days of the Buddha as closely connected with the kings of Magadha, and afterwards with the imperial Mauryan line, and with another dynasty in Nepal. It was a rāja of Pātaliputra, bearing the proud name of Chandragupta, and married to a Lichchavi princess, Kumāra Devī, who about A.D. 308 roused the Aryan clans, like his great predecessor of the same name, to a holy war in defence of Āryāvarta.

There was, no doubt, good reason why such an appeal should meet with an enthusiastic response from the Kshatriya nobility, and why the military ardour which it evoked should connote hostility to the Buddhist Sangha, especially to the Mahāyānist movement which had flourished so greatly under the patronage of the neighbouring Kushān emperors.

Though the Kushans, as we have seen, had adopted at least the external forms of Aryan religion and political institutions, it was hardly likely that the Indo-Aryan aristocracy had ever reconciled itself to the increase of Turki political domination or to the intrusion of so many foreigners unfamiliar with Indo-Aryan traditions into Indian society. Indian Buddhism had always been bound up with the traditions of Aryan social life and had never been entirely successful in obliterating the pride of race which made 'Aryan' virtue a state of ethical perfection not to be reached in their present life by men of alien blood.

Neither had the Sangha's organisation proved its efficiency for carrying out the Buddha's programme for the regeneration of human nature. Like all powerful religious organisations endowed by the State it tended to create vested interests and monopolies, the preservation of which became of more account

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than the realisation of the moral and spiritual aims of the Great Teacher. That religious organisations like the Sangha had always been prone to meddle in political matters outside their jurisdiction is shown by the law laid down in the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra* forbidding the entry of any but local co-operative guilds into the villages of the Mauryan Empire. It is easy to understand that when this rule was relaxed in favour of the Sangha by zealous Buddhist propagandists like Asoka and Kanishka, innumerable ways would be found for tyrannising over those who did not belong to the Order. And while Buddhist tyranny was not more easy to bear than that of the Brahmans, the Buddhist monks were no less adept in fostering popular superstitions for the benefit of themselves and their Order than the priests of the Vedic sacrifices had been.

The cult of relic worship developed a ritual as elaborate as that of Vedic times, and popular belief in the miraculous was exploited to promote lavish expenditure on the building of stūpas and monasteries for the safe custody of a supposititious eyelash, tooth, or toe-nail of the Blessed One, or of the ashes of a Buddhist saint.

Nor did the Good Law of love and self-control preached by the Sangha bring any nearer the era of universal peace which had been Asoka's dream. Buddhist monarchs went to war for the possession of a precious relic as eagerly as the Kshatriya kings of Vedic India followed the sacrificial horse sent out as a challenge to their neighbours. It was only when a strong central government like that of the Kushān and Andhra dynasties existed that India enjoyed a period of prolonged peace. And while the powerful and wealthy organisation of the Sangha was of no avail for keeping the foreign invader off the sacred soil of Āryāvarta, a monastic life was held in so high esteem and offered so many attractions to Kshatriya youth that the fighting strength of Āryāvarta was becoming dangerously weakened, and the resources of the State needed for national defence were absorbed by the thousands of monasteries filled with the wearers of the yellow robe.

None would be more conscious of the political and social

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dangers which threatened Indo-Aryan supremacy in India than the leaders of those Aryan clans which six and a half centuries before had answered Chandragupta Maurya's call to arms. It was among these Aryan clans that the Mauryan Emperor's successor, the first of the Gupta line, found strong and steadfast allies. In accordance with Kshatriya tradition his first effort was to put an end to the turmoil into which Āryāvarta had fallen through the break-up of the Kushān and Andhra Empires by asserting the right of government exercised by the Aryan fighting class from time immemorial. It was a right which was necessarily maintained by the sword, though founded upon the principles of justice and consideration for the general good which were accepted by the whole Aryan community and embodied in the codes of Indo-Aryan law and tradition which every Kshatriya prince learned by heart and was taught to regard as the canonical laws of his caste. A war conducted on these principles could never be a brutal war of spoliation or extermination. It was rather the upholding of the strong arm of universal law by Vishnu's vicegerent on earth and the assertion of the principle that right is might.

About twelve years after his marriage with the Lichchavī princess and the proclamation of this holy war, Chandragupta, either by voluntary alliances or by force of arms, had won the overlordship of a great part of the valley of the Ganges and Jumna, including the ancient kingdom of Ajodhyā, a name enshrined in Aryan memory as the home of the Kshatriya hero Rāma and his beloved queen Sītā, the ideal wife of Aryan tradition.

In the beginning of A.D. 320 Chandragupta was crowned as King of Kings, a date thereafter reckoned as the beginning of the great Gupta era. To celebrate the event he struck coins inscribed with his own name, that of his queen, Kumāra Devī, and of the Lichchavi clan of which he was the chief.

It is wholly misleading to describe the Gupta era as a Hindu or Brahmanical reaction. It was rather an Aryan revival, for it was the effort of the Aryan Kshatriyas, aided by the Aryan Brahmans, to restore the political and spiritual supre-

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macy of the Indo-Aryan race in Āryāvarta. The Brahmans were not opposing the Buddhism of which the Aryan prince Siddhartha was the exponent, for they had been the foremost in assimilating and adapting it to the fundamental doctrines of orthodox Indo-Aryan religion. It was against the Sangha of the fourth century A.D., under Turki, Parthian, and Scythian leadership, with the superstitious corruptions and abuses which it propagated, that the better sense of the Indo-Aryan intellect revolted. From the religious standpoint it was a revival analogous to that which the prince of the Aryan clan, Sākya Muni, had himself inspired, for it was a reawakening of the profound spiritual instinct of the Āryan race which found expression in a great renaissance of Aryan poetry, drama, and art. Chandragupta reigned about fifteen years after his consecration as King of Kings, when his mantle as the champion of Aryan India fell upon his son Samudragupta, who as Yuva-rāja had attained high proficiency in all the culture of an Aryan prince.

Very soon after his accession, *circa* A.D. 335, Samudragupta appears to have opened the victorious campaign for the suzerainty of Āryāvarta which his court poet Harishena celebrated in Sanskrit verses inscribed upon one of the imperial standards of Asoka which now stands in the fort at Allahābād. Āryāvarta at that time was a term including all the lands south of the Vindhya Mountains which were the scene of Rāma's exploits, as well as Hindustan, the Āryāvarta of the Mahābhārata. The intention of Samudragupta's campaign was thus to restore in his own person the supremacy of the Mauryan dynasty at the height of its glory under Asoka. The feeling of racial antagonism which prompted Samudragupta and his allies is shown in the different treatment accorded to the rājas of the North—the Turki, Parthian, and other non-Aryan dynasties which had established themselves under the Kushān suzerainty—and the Indo-Aryan states in the North and South whose government was either monarchical, oligarchic, or republican. The former were "forcibly rooted out" and their territories annexed to Samudragupta's own *rāj*; but the

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latter having acknowledged Samudragupta's suzerainty and paid the customary tribute remained in enjoyment of their former self-elected or hereditary forms of government.

Samudragupta appears to have changed his capital from Pātaliputra to Ajodhyā, and his southern campaign was apparently the traditional Kshatriya military pilgrimage—accompanied by the ritual of the sacrificial horse—to the places hallowed in Aryan memory by Rāma's and Sītā's wanderings in the forest, and by the victorious progress of Rāma's army marching to the rescue of his queen when she was abducted by Dravidian pirates and carried off to their stronghold in Ceylon. Marching along the eastern road through Orissa, or Kalinga, Samudragupta first obtained the submission of the king of that region and then entered the districts between the Krishna and Godāvari rivers, passing the sacred hill of Chitrakuta and the country famed as the scene of Rāma's exile. Having forced his way further south to Kānchi, or Conjeveram, and conquered the local kings who opposed him, he crossed over the southern end of the Indian continent and returned in triumph to his capital through the western districts of the Dekhan.

There the Vedic rite of *Asvamēdha* was completed in solemn state by the sacrifice of the horse which had led Samudragupta's victorious march, and by the lavish distribution of the rich spoils he had won. One of the gold medals struck by Samudragupta to celebrate the event, with a representation of the horse and sacrificial altar, is in the British Museum, and the carved stone horse with an inscription on it which now stands at the entrance to the Lucknow Museum may be another memorial of his triumph.

The Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon throw interesting light upon the history of the Gupta era. They both explain why Samudragupta refrained from any attempt to repeat Rāma's final exploit by the conquest of Ceylon, and prove that there was no narrow sectarian feeling in the Aryan revival which the Gupta era inaugurated. Ceylon at that time was practically a part of Aryan India. Its dynasty was of Indo-Aryan

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not Dravidian descent, and Hīnayāna Buddhism, which flourished there, was representative of the older Aryan culture of Asoka's time. There was therefore no feeling of racial or religious antagonism between Ceylon and the Aryans of Northern India. At the beginning of Samudragupta's reign Meghavarna, the reigning King of Ceylon, had despatched a mission with costly presents which had established cordial relations between the two rulers and had led to the fulfilment of Meghavarna's desire to found a monastery near the Bodhi Tree at Gayā for the benefit of Sinhalese students and pilgrims. The toleration shown by Samudragupta and his Brahman advisers in allowing a splendid Buddhist abbey, richly endowed, to be given a place of honour in his territory proves that the so-called Brahmanical reaction was not inspired by narrow sectarian feelings.

Samudragupta by his conquests considerably enlarged the empire of the Guptas and fulfilled his father's mission by releasing Āryāvarta from foreign domination and reasserting the principle of Kshatriya or Indo-Aryan hegemony over the whole of India; though apparently he did not maintain more than a nominal suzerainty as King of Kings over the Dekhan and Southern India after his return from his great southern campaign. The limits of the Kushān Empire were again pushed back to the Indus, and the influence of Mongolian and Hellenistic culture which Kanishka had introduced into India was superseded by a great revival of Sanskrit learning under the patronage of the Gupta emperors.

Sanskrit, the classical language of Brahman and Kshatriyan culture, though it had long ceased to be a vernacular even among the Indo-Aryan classes who called themselves 'pure,' and though as an official literary language it had been superseded at many Buddhist courts and seats of learning by Pāli and local dialects, had always remained the vehicle by which the religion and philosophy of the Vedas and the early traditions of Aryan culture had been handed down from one generation to another by Brahman gurus in their asrams and in the courts of old-fashioned rājas who stood aloof from popular

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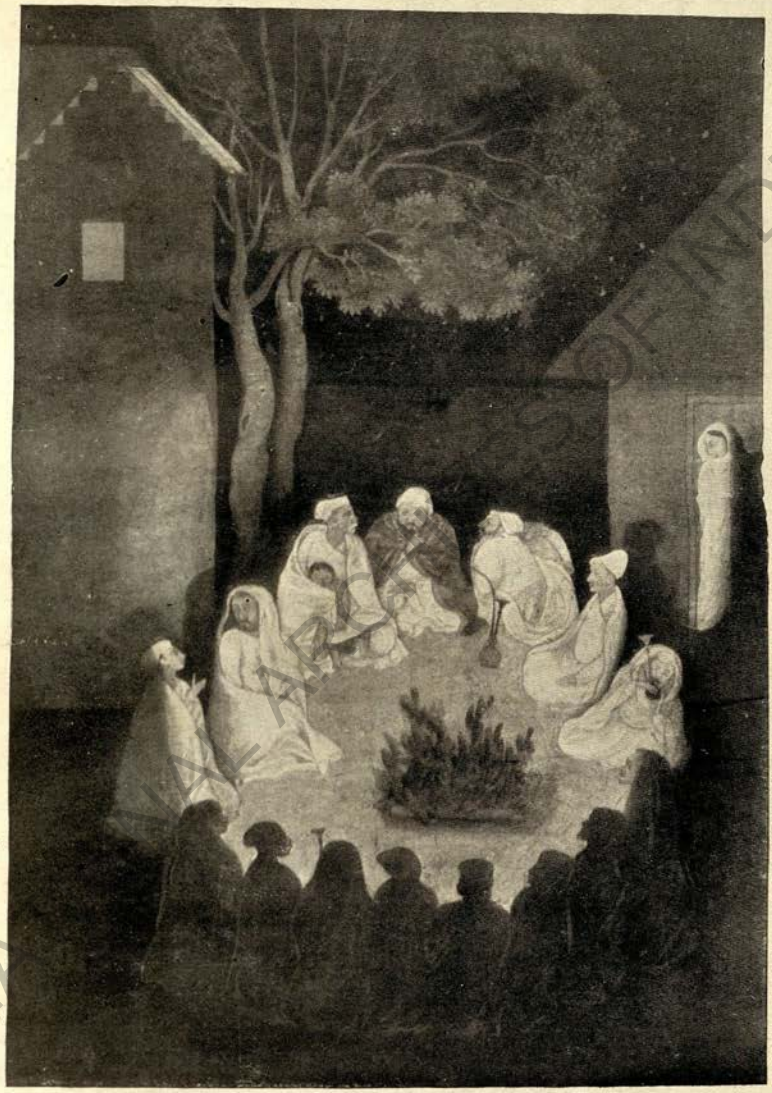

10. Travellers or Pilgrims listening to a Village Kathak

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religious movements. Sanskrit, though it might be called the Brahmanical language, was also that in which every pure-blooded Aryan prince, even a disciple of Gautama, would be instructed in the duties of his position. Sanskrit, therefore, naturally was the official language of the Gupta imperial court, instead of Pāli, Greek, or Turki, and the linguistic medium through which the Indo-Aryan revival found expression.

The Brahman guru emerged from the obscurity of his forest hermitage and basking once more in the sunshine of imperial favour became the leader of the new national movement in the place of the Buddhist bhikku, whose influence had waned through the frequent abuse of his authority and popular dislike of the foreigner. The village *kathaks* no longer touched popular sentiment by stories of the Buddha's self-sacrifice and divine compassion, but found ready listeners to praises of the mighty Kshatriya then seated on Rāma's throne at Ajodhyā, who had revived the glorious traditions of the Aryan race. The Indo-Aryan revival of the Gupta period was distinguished from the Buddhist propaganda of Asoka's time by being based upon aristocratic rather than democratic sentiment, and in being a patriotic rather than a religious movement.

It is true that Brahman leaders took the opportunity to propagate their religious teaching by giving the *Bhagavad Gītā*, 'The Song of the Blessed One,' a setting in the great Aryan epic, the Mahābhārata; but this seems to show that it was put forward as an appeal to the national feeling of Āryāvarta rather than as a new religious message. It was a call to Kshatriya youth to fulfil their religious duties by warlike deeds rather than by meditation in the seclusion of the monastery. Krishna, the military leader and man of action, who had delivered his people from the tyrant's yoke and destroyed the demons who were ravaging the land—the Divine Cowherd, beloved of the village folk—would point the way to *mukti* for every one by simple devotion to duty, instead of Gautama, the Sākya ascetic whose pietism would emasculate the manhood of Āryāvarta in the monastic cell. "He that performeth a

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dutiful action independently of the fruit of action, he is an ascetic, he is a yogi" (*Bhagavad Gītā*, VI, i).

The revival of Brahmanism in the form of the Vishnu cult was an inevitable psychological reaction after the many centuries in which monasticism had been preached as the only door by which the highest spiritual perfection could be reached. The Gupta era was the beginning of an Indo-Aryan renaissance. Yet it would be easy to exaggerate the direct influence of the Gupta court upon the religious sentiment of the people. None of the Guptas were zealous religious enthusiasts like Asoka. They were liberal patrons of Brahmanical learning, but they did not lay hands upon the endowments of the Buddhist Sangha or attempt to break up its powerful organisation. Neither did they countenance any persecution of the followers of Gautama. The capital of the Gupta emperors became the centre of Brahmanical culture, but the masses followed the religious traditions of their forefathers, and Buddhist and Jain monasteries continued to be public schools and universities for the greater part of India.

The decline of Buddhism and its final disappearance from India as a separate religious cult were the consequence of a gradual process of intellectual absorption, rather than the result of any outside pressure. The whole logical position of Sākya Muni's philosophy was shifted and brought closely into line with that of the Brahmanical schools directly the Buddha himself was recognised as the absolute Good—or as a personal God—and there is no doubt that this became the authorised teaching of the Sangha very soon after his death. The development of Mahāyāna teaching made the difference between Buddhism and Brahmanism no greater than that which separated one Brahmanical school from another, and though the Sangha as an organisation remained in India until it was finally broken up in the Muhammadan invasions, its intellectual supremacy was already superseded in the beginning of the Gupta era by the new schools of Kshatriya and Brahman philosophy.

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THE GUPTA EMPIRE

In India militarism has always been the agent rather than the originator of social and political revolutions, and it was the Brahman intellect more than the Kshatriya sword which led to the downfall of the Buddhist Sangha. With the encouragement of the Gupta emperors their Brahman statesmen set to work to take popular education out of the hands of Buddhist monks by compiling into one great religious and moral code the traditions of Indo-Aryan history, as recorded by the bards of the Aryan clans, the court poets and gurus, and the teachers of Brahman asrams. This noble epic in stately Sanskrit slokas, under the name of the Mahābhārata, the story of the Great War, containing the essence of Kshatriya polity, philosophy, and religious doctrine, was an encyclopaedia of hero-worship and a moral text-book which gave abundant material for a system of popular education. The *sādhu* and *sannyāsin* carried it throughout the length and breadth of India, as the bhikkus of the Sangha had formerly spread the message of the Buddha. Both in the original Sanskrit text and in vernacular translations it played the same part in moulding Indian character and in forming the synthesis of thought called 'Hinduism' as the Old and New Testaments have done in Christianity and the Qurān in Islam.

The fact that the Mahābhārata is the same in Bengal and in Southern India, in the Panjab and throughout the Dekhan, shows that it was carefully edited with a set purpose and is not, as the superficial reader might imagine, a corpus of Brahmanical literature strung together haphazard in different periods of time. The purpose of the Mahābhārata, as edited by the Brahman scholars of the Gupta court, is well described by a Western writer who had rare insight into the psychology of Indian history: "The foreign reader, taking it up as sympathetic reader merely and not as scholar, is at once struck by two features; in the first place, its unity in complexity; and, in the second, its constant effort to impress on its hearers the idea of a single centralised India with an heroic tradition of her own as formative and uniting impulse. It is in good sooth a monarch's dream of an imperial race. The

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Gupta Emperor of Pātaliputra who commissioned the last recension of the great work was as conscious as Asoka before him or Akbar after of making to his people the magic statement, 'India is one.'" [1]

The recension of the Mahābhārata is only one of the great works attributed to the Brahman pandits of the Gupta court. The Rāmāyana in its present form seems to be the ancient legend of Rāma's exploits retold by the poets who sang the praises of Samudragupta's triumphal progress in the footsteps of the Aryan hero. The Vishnu and some of the other Purānas probably belong to the same period, while tradition also refers to the Gupta age the classics of the Indian drama, *Sakūntala* and other works of Kālidāsa.

It is not certain whether Samudragupta in addition to his military achievements took the lead in promoting this great renaissance of Sanskrit literature. Indian romance and legend refer it vaguely to Vikrāmāditya—'the God-like Hero'—a title which was assumed by Samudragupta's son and successor, Chandragupta II. But Harishena, who composed the inscription on the Allahābād pillar, refers to Samudragupta's accomplishments as a poet and musician, and one of the gold coins of his reign preserved in the British Museum shows the Emperor seated on a throne playing the *vina*, or Indian lute; so it would not be rash to date the beginning of the Sanskrit renaissance under the Guptas from the middle of the fourth century A.D.

[1] *Footfalls of Indian History*, by Sister Nivedita, p. 180.

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CHAPTER XI

INDIA IN GUPTA TIMES

THE Code of Manu, though it was probably compiled some centuries before this time and, like the Mahābhārata, embodied Aryan traditions of much greater antiquity, may be taken to represent the sociology and polity of Āryāvarta under the Gupta emperors. Though based upon the traditions of Vedic India it describes a state of society in many respects altered. Caste distinctions are strictly defined, and the supremacy of the Brahmans as spiritual leaders of the people is regarded as incontestable, though only by reason of their higher purity and superior knowledge of Vedic wisdom.

Of the three twice-born classes Brahmans only were absolutely forbidden to marry Sūdra women. There was no expiation for a Brahman who defiled himself by such an alliance. Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas were advised to choose their first wives from their own class, and a Śūdra man must not marry into a higher class. But with these exceptions there was no absolute bar to intermarriage between the different vārnas, only it was regarded as an indication of a weak intellect for any twice-born man to debase the purity of his family stock by marriage with a Sūdra woman.

The diet of Brahmans was to be strictly vegetarian, except on special occasions on which sacrificial meat was allowed, and certain vegetables, such as garlic, onions, leeks, and mushrooms, were forbidden. No mortal was more sinful than he who desired "to increase his own flesh with the flesh of another creature" not offered as a sacrifice to the gods or to his ancestors (v, 52). Food was to be eaten reverently, after

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ablution and prayer, and without excess. "Excessive eating is prejudicial to health, to fame, and to bliss in Heaven: it is injurious to virtue and odious among men" (ii, 57). The fact that fruit trees were especially assigned to Brahmans as their portion of the riches of the earth may be connected with the planting of fruit gardens for the use of travellers and pilgrims which belonged to the tradition of public works in India ages before the Mogul times. There is no mention of the soma plant, the intoxicating juice of which played so important a part in Brahmanical ritual of Vedic times. Even in Chandragupta Maurya's time soma plantations were provided for Brahman communities by the State.[1] The marked change from the beef-eating and soma-drinking Brahman of Vedic times shows the effect which Asoka's reforms had upon the habits of Aryan society.

There are other indications of the deep impress which Buddhist ethics had made upon Brahmanical laws. In the epic period hunting and gambling were the chief relaxations of Indo-Aryan kings, but Manu classes them among the four most pernicious vices which a dutiful king must shun (vii, 50). Kautilīya only provided for the proper regulation of gambling-houses, but Manu insists that all gambling-houses should be suppressed and that the king should punish anyone who indulged in gambling either privately or publicly, even if only for amusement. As Manu includes in his damnatory clauses not only gamblers but public dancers and singers and all sellers of spirituous liquors it must be assumed that his puritan code sometimes reflected his own personal views rather than the practical politics of the State. But Fa-Hien's observations show that at least in the home provinces of the Gupta Empire, Madhyadēsa, the laws of Manu were strictly observed with regard to eating of animal food, drinking, and hunting; for he says that "the people of this country kill no living creature nor do they drink intoxicating liquors; and, with the exception of the Chandālas they eat neither garlic nor onions. . . . In this country they do not keep swine or fowls, they do not

[1] *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*, Book II, chap. ii.

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deal in living animals, nor are there shambles or wine shops round their markets. . . . The Chandālas alone go hunting and deal in flesh." [1]

In other respects the polity of Manu, which may be taken to have been sound Aryan law in the Gupta period, does not differ much from that of Kautilīya, which is typical of Mauryan times. Kingship was a prerogative of the Kshatriya class and was established for the maintenance of the whole system of traditional laws, religious and civil, which governed Indo-Aryan society. At the same time Manu recognises the possibility of a Sūdra becoming a king, for he advises Brahmans to avoid any city governed by a Sūdra or inhabited by a majority of heretics or outcasts.

The explanation of the origin of monarchy given by Manu is the same as that of the Mahābhārata. It was instituted after a period of universal anarchy for the purpose of re-establishing Aryan laws and institutions. The king was the personification of justice, and his authority within the limits of Aryan law was absolute. "All classes would become corrupt; all barriers would be broken down; there would be total confusion among men if punishment were not inflicted, or were inflicted unduly" (vii, 24). A king who inflicted just legal punishments greatly increased virtue, pleasure, and wealth; but punishment itself would destroy the king who was crafty, voluptuous, and wrathful.

The king's council, as usual, was to consist of seven or eight ministers chosen from those whose ancestors were servants of kings, who were versed in the holy books, who were brave, skilled in the use of weapons, and of noble lineage. The king was bound to consult his councillors on questions of peace and war, military, naval, and financial matters, on things concerning the protection of the people, and on the proper use of the royal revenues (vii, 54–56). He was to act "as a father to his people," for the king who foolishly or rashly oppressed his subjects would, sooner or later, together with his family, be deprived of his kingdom and of life (vii, 111). We have

[1] *Travels of Fah-Hian*, Beal's translation, p. 55.

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already noticed several historical instances of the fulfilment of this principle of Indo-Aryan law.

The organisation of the local administration likewise resembled that of the Mauryan period. Villages were grouped in tens, twenties, hundreds, and thousands, each group under the headship of a State official. The head of the smallest group had for his perquisite the produce of two plough-lands, or as much land as could be tilled by two ploughs each drawn by six bullocks. The head of twenty villages received the produce of ten plough-lands, the head of a hundred the revenue of a village, and the head of a thousand the revenue of a town.

A governor was appointed to check any abuse of authority by these imperial officials. "Since the servants of the king whom he has appointed guardians of districts are generally knaves, who seize what belongs to other men, from such knaves let him defend his people" (vii, 123). Manu only refers in general terms to the principles of taxation recognised by Aryan law. Taxes on merchandise were to be levied so that the king and merchant should both receive their dues. Learned Brahmans were always to be exempt from taxes and suitably provided for. Petty traffickers were to be lightly taxed, and the lower classes of artisans and labourers might give one day's work in a month in lieu of taxes. In time of war or of urgent necessity a Kshatriya king might take up to one-fourth of the crop as the price of protection of his realm, provided that he did not falter in protecting his people with his sword. Similarly the taxes demanded by the royal treasury from the Vaisya class in times of prosperity must not exceed one-twelfth of their crops and one-fiftieth of their personal profits; but in times of public necessity the medium rate of one-sixth—or even one-fourth, the highest limit—might be lawfully demanded. The highest permissible tax on merchandise was one-twentieth of the profits.

Manu's regulations also throw light upon the ethics of ritualistic purity which governed caste distinctions. Among the persons to be avoided when oblations were offered to the

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gods or to ancestors, and as company at festivals, were physicians—presumably because they were liable to be infected by their patients—anyone suffering from phthisis, elephantiasis, epilepsy, leprosy, or erysipelas; a one-eyed man; a feeder of cattle; a usurer; a man who subsisted by the wealth of his relatives; a drunkard or swindler; a mariner of the ocean; an oilman; a suborner of perjury; a gambling-house keeper; a priest who made money by image-worship; an unlearned Brahman; or a craftsman who built houses for gain. In the same category were dancers; breeders of sporting dogs; a falconer; a seducer of damsels; a man delighting in mischief; a Brahman living as a Śūdra; the husband of a Śūdra woman; a Śūdra teacher; and Brahmans who only sacrificed to the inferior gods.

The views of the old Aryan law-giver on the relationship of the sexes were that "a woman is never fit for independence": their fathers must protect them in childhood, their husbands in their youth, and their sons in their old age. It was a settled rule that women had no business with the sacred text of the Vedas. It was a father's duty to find a husband for his daughter as soon as possible after arrival at maturity; but if she remained unmarried for three years after that time she was at liberty to choose for herself—only in this case she was not to take with her the jewels she had received from her father, mother, or brothers.

Married women must be honoured by their husbands and male relations, and provided with suitable ornaments and apparel; for "a wife being gaily adorned her whole house is adorned" (iii, 62). "A man might take a second wife if the first should not bear children within eight years after marriage; or ten years after marriage if all his children had died; or after eleven years if he had no son. But a good and virtuous wife must never be disgraced, though she might be superseded by another with her own consent."

Manu concludes by a summary of the law of Karma and transmigration by which every human being receives the reward or punishment of his thoughts, words, and actions in

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this life, or through rebirth in a higher or lower state. He sums up by declaring that the highest aim of humanity is to attain through Brahmanhood to the knowledge and right worship of the One God, as taught by the Upanishads.

Samudragupta's son, Chandragupta II, succeeded his father about A.D. 380, and as above mentioned adopted the title of Vikrāmāditya. The celebrated Iron Pillar now standing in the courtyard of Qutb-ud-dīn's mosque at Delhi is a *dhwaja-stambha*, or imperial standard, similar to those of Asoka, with the imperial symbol of Vishnu's blue lotus flower at the top, which was set up by Vikrāmāditya to record his campaigns in Bengal and the Panjab by which he either suppressed an attempt to throw off his suzerainty or extended the territory won by his father. The conquest of Mālwā, Gujerat, and the peninsula of Surāshtra, or Kāthiāwār, where a dynasty known as the Sāka, of Turki origin, had ruled for several centuries, restored Aryan political supremacy in Western India, and extended Vikrāmāditya's suzerainty to the Arabian Sea. The reigning king, Rudra-Sena, whom Vikrāmāditya is said to have slain with his own hand, bore an Aryan name, but is described as a dissolute creature unworthy of the traditions of Aryan kingship. By this conquest Vikrāmāditya obtained possession of the Sāka capital, Ujjain, an historic city known as the headquarters of Asoka when he was viceroy for his father, and as the birthplace of his brother Mahendra, who headed the Buddhist mission to Ceylon. It was also famous for its university and for its astronomical observatory.

Chandragupta II is generally believed to have been the Vikrāmāditya who was the patron of the great Sanskrit dramatist Kālidāsa, and if popular tradition may be trusted Ujjain, after the fall of the Sāka dynasty, became the imperial capital where all the most renowned Sanskrit poets, artists, and scholars of Āryāvarta added to the lustre of the Gupta court. Probably the Gupta imperial family was one of those, like the Mogul line, in which father, son, and grandson

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were men of high culture and equally zealous patrons of arts and letters.

Among the most interesting records of the Gupta period are the accounts written by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien of his travels in search of the authoritative version of the rules of the Buddhist Order—the *Vināya Pitaka*. He spent six years in the journey overland from his native province of Chhang'an to the Indus, six years in India itself copying Buddhist texts and collecting sacred relics and images, and three years on his return journey to China by sea, including a visit to Ceylon which lasted about two years. One can learn nothing from his notes of the revival of Brahmanical learning, of the splendour of the imperial court, or of the achievements of Vikrāmāditya; but occasionally he turns aside from his pious quest to observe the conditions of the people and the government of the country. The people of Magadha, he declared, were happy and prosperous. The account of the organisation of an imperial government given by Kautilīya and others might perhaps justify the comment of a European scholar that it depicted "a society choking in the deadly grip of a grinding bureaucracy." [1] It is interesting, therefore, to find an impartial observer of a Hindu administration formed on similar lines stating that the people were singularly free from bureaucratic tyranny. "They have not to register their households, or attend to any magistrates and rules." The chief officers of the king had fixed incomes and they were not tempted to extort money from the people. But even where Buddhism was the State religion the prejudice against the Chandālas, or the aboriginals outside the Aryan pale, was just as strong as it was in states governed by Brahmanical laws. If any one of them entered a town or market-place he was obliged to strike a piece of wood so that the 'pure' might avoid contact with him.

It must have been a time of exceptional prosperity if, as Fa-Hien seems to imply, the State revenue was mainly derived from the rents of the royal domains, the lessees of which were

[1] Dr L. D. Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, p. 104.

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free to give up possession when they liked. The administration of justice was considerably milder than it was in the time of Asoka, for offences were generally punished by fines, and the death penalty was never inflicted. Only in cases of repeated attempts to incite disorder or rebellion the right hand of the culprit was cut off.

It is noticeable that in this time of Brahmanical revival Fa-Hien makes no mention of any form of religious persecution, or any attempt on the part of orthodox Hindu rulers to deprive the Buddhist sects of their endowments and privileges. On the contrary, Fa-Hien explains that as the records of these endowments were no longer engraved on iron, but on sheets of copper, they were preserved in good condition and handed down in the State archives from one king to another, so that the Sangha remained in undisputed possession of its proper revenues and no one dared to deprive it of them. The Sangha was in a flourishing condition, the followers of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna cults living amicably together. The monks residing in the Sangharāmas had chambers, beds, coverlets, food, drink, and clothes provided for them without stint or reserve. "Thus it is in all places." [1]

Yet many of the most sacred places of Buddhism which in the time of Asoka had a large population had fallen into decay. Gayā was waste and desolate. At Kapilavastu there was no government or people: wild elephants and lions made it difficult of access. Srāvastī, which in the Buddha's time was a great city, the capital of the kingdom of Kosala, had now no more than two hundred families. But the Buddhist monasteries at other places were rich and magnificent. They had fine water-gardens, with luxurious groves and numberless flowers of varied hues. At Mathurā the followers of the Law were numerous, and all the kings of the neighbouring countries uncovered their heads when they paid their offerings to the Sangharāmas. The king himself would often come in state and conduct the monks to his palace to provide them with food, and when the repast had been spread before the guests

[1] *Travels of Fah-Hian*, Beal's translation, p. 56.

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on the royal daïs, he and his ministers of State would take their stand on a carpet spread below—for this "was a rule for the conduct of princes which had been handed down from the time of the Blessed One."

Fa-Hien rarely alludes to the existence of orthodox Brahmanism, but in "mid-India," or the provinces which had Ajodhyā for their chief city, he mentions "ninety-six heretical sects, all of whom admitted the reality of worldly phenomena." However, he allowed them this merit, that they built *dharmasālas* along the roads where travellers found shelter, food, and drink, and were supplied with all necessaries. Even Buddhist pilgrims were entertained at the public expense, though separate provision was made for them.

At Pātaliputra the people were "rich, prosperous, and virtuous." The nobles and landowners of the country had founded free hospitals within the city to which were admitted all poor and helpless patients suffering from all kinds of infirmities. "They are well taken care of," says Fa-Hien, "and a doctor attends them, food and medicine being supplied according to their wants. Thus they are made quite comfortable, and when they are well they may go away." [1]

In Pātaliputra there once lived a wise Brahman of profound learning who did much to extend the influence of the Law of Buddha. He belonged to the Mahāyāna school, but lived apart from the world in pious seclusion. The king honoured him as his guru, and for about fifty years the whole country reverenced him and placed entire confidence in his advice. When the king went to visit him he did not presume to sit down in his presence, and if he should from a feeling of affection grasp his guru's hand the latter would immediately wash himself from head to foot. This anecdote of Fa-Hien brings the evidence of a keen and impartial observer to show how little Buddhism had diminished the social and political influence of Brahmans or broken down the restrictions of caste rules.

Both the Great and Little Vehicles flourished at Pātaliputra, and if any sectarian rancour existed Fa-Hien did not observe

[1] *Fa-Hien's Travels*, Giles' translation, chap. xxvii.

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it. Once a year, he said, there was a great popular festival in which all sects, including the Brahman students, joined. It was inaugurated by a great procession of images placed upon four-wheeled temple cars. The superstructure of the cars, over twenty-two feet in height, was made of bambus lashed together in five stages, covered with white linen and painted with gaily coloured pictures. Upon them were placed images of all the Devas, ornamented with gold, silver, and lapis lazuli, under canopies of embroidered silk. At the four corners of the cars there were shrines within which were placed images of the Buddha in yogi attitude with a Bodhisattva in attendance.[1] Thus they were drawn into the city from the neighbouring monasteries in a stately procession, accompanied by singers and musicians, by priests offering flowers and swinging censers, and great crowds of the lay brethren. At the city gates the Brahman students came forward to salute the images. There were all sorts of games and amusements for the people, and in the evening the city was illuminated with lamps.

In the centre of the city Fa-Hien noticed the ruins of Asoka's palace: the walls, built of massive stones, the doorways and sculptured towers, were, he declared, "no human work." After a pilgrimage to Gayā, Benares, and other places, Fa-Hien returned to Pātaliputra and spent three years in studying Sanskrit and in copying a manuscript of the *Vināya Pitaka* and other Buddhist texts which he had sought for in vain in the earlier part of his travels. He gives the reason that throughout the whole of Northern India the learned masters of the Law trusted entirely to oral tradition handed down from one generation of scholars to another, and no written copies of the Master's precepts were to be found.

Now that it is so common to impose literary shibboleths as final tests of culture and political capacity it is interesting to observe that at a time when India had reached the zenith of her creative power in arts and letters, a position at least as

[1] The description suggests that the cars were miniature reproductions of the great temple at Bodh-Gayā.

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high as that reached by any modern state, and had achieved a system of self-government probably as perfect as the world has yet known—if the highest standard of political ethics and the general happiness of the community be accepted as criteria—she found it not only unnecessary but undesirable to make book-learning a test either of literary culture or of political capacity. In the Golden Age of Indian literature writing was a mercantile accomplishment rather than an intellectual one: the highest intellect of the land preferred an oral method of education as more exact and more mentally efficient than that of text-books. But in days when machinery has become all-powerful even our mentality must be machine-made, lest we should go too slowly in the mad race for world-markets and world-power.

It is significant that Magadha, and not the Kushān country, was the centre in which Fa-Hien found the authoritative texts and symbolic images of Mahāyāna Buddhism; also that Sanskrit, the literary language of the Brahman schools, was used in Magadha for the written statement of the Buddhist Law. This confirms what the true reading of Gandhāran sculpture also evidences, that the influence of Hellenistic art upon Indian was purely technical in character and was in no way the spiritual or intellectual force which shaped its ideals and ordered its forms of expression. Magadha and not Gandhāra was the spiritual centre of the Mahāyāna Buddhism to which Kanishka gave imperial patronage.

Fa-Hien had not set out on his adventurous journey alone, but one of his fellow-pilgrims died, and others returned to China, so when he reached Pātaliputra he had but one companion, Tao-Ching. The latter was so deeply impressed by the strict decorum and religious deportment of the monks of Magadha—"even in the midst of worldly influences"—which he contrasted with the lax discipline and ignorance of the Law shown by the Buddhist priests of his own country, that he resolved to remain in India until in some future existence he should reach Nirvāna. So Fa-Hien, desiring with his whole heart to spread the true knowledge of the Good Law through-

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out his native land, returned alone with a precious collection of sacred texts and images. He spent two years at Tamlak, then the principal port of Kalinga, but now thirty miles inland, and about the same time in Ceylon. Then, embarking on a great merchant ship manned by two hundred men, he set out on his return journey to China by sea. He reached Java after a perilous voyage of ninety days, and stayed in the island five months. He then resumed his voyage in another large merchant vessel, which he found very comfortable, with a number of Hindu merchants from Java, described as Brahmans, as fellow-passengers. The ship was provisioned for fifty days, but on account of stormy weather the voyage lasted three months.

Fa-Hien here records the only occasion on which he was exposed to any danger or subjected to any annoyance through sectarian animosity. Provisions ran short, and he narrowly escaped the fate of being landed on a desert island, for the Brahmans attributed their misfortunes to Fa-Hien and the heretical books and images he had brought on board. However, they refrained from molesting him for fear of the punishment they might receive from the King of China, and Fa-Hien at length reached his native land in safety with all his precious cargo.

Fa-Hien's account of India makes us understand that it was only when Buddhism was detached from its parent stem and transplanted in foreign lands that it became a fixed system of dogma which ceased to develop ethically and philosophically. In India it was always a synthesis and always in process of evolution or disintegration. Buddhism grew out of Brahmanism, or early Hinduism, and for a time contained Hinduism within itself. Later Hinduism grew out of Buddhism, and the latter, though disintegrated, continued to live in India within the new synthesis of Hinduism. In India religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life.

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CHAPTER XII

THE HUNS IN INDIA—GUPTA ART AND ARCHITECTURE

VIKRĀMĀDITYA was succeeded in A.D. 413 by his son, Kumāragupta, in whose reign, which lasted over forty years, the troubles of Āryāvarta were renewed. It is worth while to recall the fact that it was a fixed principle of Indo-Aryan polity never to embark upon wars of foreign aggression, *i.e.* outside the boundaries of Bhārata-Varsha, or Āryāvarta in its widest sense. Even the great war-lords Samudragupta and Vikrāmāditya, with the most powerful armies and navies at their command, and with almost unlimited opportunities at a time when the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall, were content to limit their title of world-sovereignty to the confines of Āryāvarta and the people who came within the Aryan pale. The great wealth of India's natural resources and its geographical unity might seem to make the temptation less than it would be under other conditions, but such conditions, as a rule, only tend to inflame the lust for power of would-be world-conquerors.

But though the wisdom of Indo-Aryan polity thus protected the State from the consequences of aggressive foreign wars, the love of independence which always inspired the Aryan people and the very heterogeneous character of the racial elements of which Āryāvarta was formed were disintegrating forces always threatening to weaken dangerously India's power of resistance to attacks from outside. The imperial constitution of Āryāvarta, though nominally on a popular basis, was too little representative of local interests to hold together long except under rulers of unusual capacity and high character, or when

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the semi-independent states which were federated with forgot their mutual jealousies and rivalries in the face of a great common danger.

Every interval of peace and prosperity under a strong central government was quickly followed by internal dissensions which sooner or later opened the door to the invader on the north-west frontier, always ready for an opportunity to loot the prosperous cities of the Indian plains. The prestige of Samudragupta's and Vikrāmāditya's arms maintained peace in Āryāvarta for over thirty years of Kumāragupta's reign, but towards the end of it the Gupta dynasty was seriously threatened by the attempt of one of its vassal states to assert its independence by force of arms. The details of the struggle are only known by an inscription in which it is recorded that, after a serious defeat inflicted on the imperial armies by a confederation known as the Pushyamitra, the Crown Prince, Skandagupta, retrieved the situation by the complete overthrow of the enemy.

In 455 Kumāragupta died and was succeeded by Skandagupta. Seeing how narrow was the difference which separated Brahmanism from Buddhism at this time it is not surprising to find that though the Guptas were known as devoted adherents of the Vishnu cult, Skandagupta is claimed in the Buddhist chronicles as a zealous disciple of Vāsubandhu, a celebrated Mahāyānist teacher of that time, and as a liberal patron of the Sangha. It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that he therefore renounced the worship of Vishnu and ceased to be a Hindu. It simply meant that he regarded the Buddha, rather than Krishna, as the Divine Guru who showed him the right way to worship Vishnu. Skandagupta could therefore continue to show on his imperial coinage the symbols of a pious Hindu ruler without any inconsistency or offence to the spirits of his illustrious ancestors.

The first duty which Skandagupta was called upon to perform after his accession to his father's throne was to take up arms in defence of Āryāvarta against a foreign enemy—the most powerful and relentless which had threatened its

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security since the Turki invasions. The left wing of the vast hordes of savage Huns which had started on their devastating work westward turned aside to pour down into the Indus valley through the passes of the north-western Himālayas. The first onrush of the barbarians was successfully met. Skandagupta inflicted a crushing defeat upon them, and bringing the joyful news to his mother, "just as Krishna when he had slain his enemies hastened to his mother, Devaki," he ordered his victory to be celebrated by sacrifices to the Devas and by the usual permanent memorial, a Vishnu pillar, as a thank-offering for the delivery of Āryāvarta from her hateful enemies. The pillar, with an inscription recording the event, still stands at Bhitari in the Ghāzipur district, not far from Benares.

About twelve years later the Huns renewed their furious onrush, and this time secured a strong footing in Gandhāra, the former centre of the Kushān Empire, where one of the chieftains made himself execrated by the atrocities he committed upon the Buddhist monks and laymen. From 470 until his death about ten years later Skandagupta was engaged in resisting successive incursions into India of these ferocious exponents of the doctrine of 'frightfulness' in war. The Indo-Aryan military code fully recognised that war is war. The *Sukrā-nitisāra*, after explaining the ethics of warfare as recognised by Aryans, and forbidding the slaughter of old men, women, and children, and even fighting men when wounded, asleep, naked, or unarmed,[1] makes the reservation that these rules applied only to wars conducted according to the laws of morality. There was a method of warfare, the *kutayudha*, or non-moral war, which was justified as having been used by Rāma, Krishna, and other Aryan heroes in exterminating demons like Rāvana and others who were outside humanitarian laws. But, though it was admitted in India of the fifth century A.D. that there was no method like this for extirpating a powerful enemy, it was unthinkable that it should be employed in wars between Aryan and Aryan. *Tempora mutantur.*

[1] Chap. IV, Sect. VII, 724.

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There is only vague tradition to rely upon for the details of Skandagupta's later wars with the Huns; but the greater part of North-western India seems to have been overrun by the barbarians, who followed the same tactics of indiscriminate slaughter of non-combatants, destruction and plunder of monasteries and religious monuments, as their fellow-tribesmen in Europe. The imperial treasury found great difficulty in financing Skandagupta's campaigns, and the usual method of meeting such great emergencies was resorted to, *i.e.* the standard of the gold coinage was reduced, for the later issues of Skandagupta's *suvarnas*, or pieces of gold, show a decline in the amount of pure gold from 108 to 73 grains.[1]

Apparently Skandagupta kept the Hunnish hordes at bay until about 480, when he died and was succeeded by his half-brother Puragupta, who in accordance with the traditions of Aryan polity seems to have superseded the direct heirs to the succession as being better qualified to undertake the responsibilities of government in such troublous times. The fact that the Gupta gold coinage in his reign was raised above the normal standard of purity[2] is an indication that the empire was recovering its internal prosperity; but the Huns were still devastating its north-western provinces, and continued to do so throughout Puragupta's short reign of about five years.

The next of the line, Narasinhagupta Bālāditya, who came to the throne about 485, was distinguished alike by his piety and his military achievements. He had for his spiritual teacher Skandagupta's Buddhist preceptor, Vasubandhu, who thereafter had an honoured place at the imperial court in Ajodhyā. Many Buddhist seats of learning, especially the famous university at Nālanda, benefited by Bālāditya's patronage. Nevertheless he exhibited the tolerant spirit of an Aryan sovereign by allowing his sister to take for a husband a learned Brahman, named Vāsurāta, who was known for his zeal in defending orthodox Vedic teaching against Vāsubandhu's attacks.

The philosophical disputations of the learned pandits of the

[1] Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, 2nd edit., p. 291.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 291.

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court seem for a time to have diverted Bālāditya's attention from the great dangers which threatened the security of his empire. Wave after wave of marauding Huns continued to pour through the passes of the north-west, and the imperial armies failed to stem their advance into the Indus valley. About 495 the rich province of Mālwā was wrested from Bālāditya by a Hun chieftain named Toramāna, who abandoned the predatory habits of his race, adopted Indo-Aryan royal titles, and exercised suzerainty over the local rājas in Central India and the Panjab who formerly owed allegiance to the Guptas. Other rājas in the Dekhan seized the opportunity to assert their independence, so that the Gupta Empire was gradually reduced to a shadow of its former greatness.

Toramāna before he died had consolidated his power in the frontier provinces almost as effectively as the Kushans. He appears to have been a sagacious ruler. Perhaps the Turki element in the population which had already become Aryanised made it easier for the Huns to assimilate Indo-Aryan ideas and traditions of government. But his son Mīhiragula, who succeeded him about 510, was an unmitigated savage whose record for fiendish cruelty might stand with that of Nero and Attila. The relentless slaughter and persecution of his Buddhist subjects at length aroused all Āryāvarta to combine in attacking the tyrant, and a confederation headed by Bālāditya and Yasodharman, a rāja of Central India, defeated the Hun army, *circa* 528, in a pitched battle in which Mīhiragula himself was taken prisoner. He would have forfeited his life as a punishment for his misdeeds had not the chivalrous Bālāditya set an example of Buddhist piety and respect for Aryan laws by releasing him and allowing him to go into exile. His younger brother was then placed upon the throne as his successor at Sākala (Sialkot), the capital of the Hun dynasty.

Mīhiragula's brutal character was not bettered by Bālāditya's magnanimity. He took shelter in Kashmīr, where the rāja protected him and gave him and his retinue a small appanage for their maintenance. But at the first opportunity he made a treacherous attack upon his benefactor, seized the

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kingdom for himself, and with the augmented strength which success always brings to tyrants of criminal propensities next invaded Gandhāra. There he sought to recover his lost prestige among his compatriots by a characteristic exhibition of Hunnish methods of warfare. The royal family was exterminated, thousands of non-combatants were massacred; the splendid Buddhist monasteries and shrines were plundered and laid in ruins. But within a year after this exploit Mihiragula died, and the speedy decline of the Hun supremacy which followed after his death illustrated the futility of 'frightfulness' as a means of gaining permanent control over the destinies of nations.

But though the Huns ceased thereafter to have any importance as an independent ruling race in India, the effect of a century of Hun incursions—following those of the Sākas, Kushans, and other Central Asian nomads in previous centuries, partly warlike and partly peaceful in character—could not fail to make a deep impression upon the sociology and polity of Northern India. Even after the military strength of Āryāvarta had broken the Hun armies and arrested their further advance, the principles of Aryan religion forbade the deliberate wholesale extermination of a defeated enemy—even the detested Mlechchhas. The more peaceful foreign immigrants would settle down to agricultural pursuits and become recognised as Sūdras. Many detached bands of fighting men would, as they did in similar circumstances in Europe, establish themselves in remote corners of the country and by the help of forced local labour build themselves hill-fortresses strong enough to stand a prolonged siege. Having thus established their right of overlordship by force of arms the Hun or Turki chieftains and their retainers would have no difficulty in securing brides of Indo-Aryan blood by the right of capture well recognised by Aryan tradition. Their descendants were eventually admitted into the Aryan pale as members of the Kshatriya caste, but naturally they would take rank from their maternal ancestry rather than from their Hun or Turki relations.

There can be little doubt that the numerous ramifications

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of the Rajput clans of the present day are the result of the many foreign elements which were assimilated by Indo-Aryan society from the fourth to the sixth centuries and in later times. To the same cause may be attributed the greatly increased strictness of caste regulations and the gradual weakening of Indo-Aryan political strength which became apparent in succeeding centuries. The pure-blooded Rajputs who prided themselves on their descent from the heroes of the Mahābhārata kept themselves aloof from the foreign intruders, as their ancestors had held themselves aloof from the non-Aryan population in ancient times. Racial prejudice added to the growing prestige of the Brahmans as being less tainted with an admixture of impure Mlechchha blood. The same reason made the Brahman aristocracy look askance at alliances with Kshatriya women and tended to increase the penalties for all breaches of caste custom.

This strong infusion of barbarian blood lowered the high ethical standard of Indo-Aryan tradition and favoured the growth of many of the vulgar superstitions which were never countenanced by the great philosophers and spiritual teachers of Āryāvarta. It tended also to debase the free spirit of Aryan political ideals, to weaken the authority of the popular assemblies, and to increase the arbitrary power exercised by the head of the State. 'Oriental despotism' was of Tartar or Mongolian creation: it was never recognised in Indo-Aryan traditional laws.

The death of Bāliditya about 530 may be taken as the end of the political greatness of the Guptas, though his successors continued to rule over Magadha, or the eastern provinces of the empire, with Pātaliputra as their capital. The Gupta era is well known as the Golden Age of Sanskrit literature, and Orientalists are agreed in attributing to the Sanskrit revival the extant recensions of the epics, the works of Kālidāsa, and other Indo-Aryan classics. Archaeologists are far less precise in defining the characteristic expression of Gupta culture in art and architecture. Fergusson and other authorities have

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attempted to distinguish a Gupta style of architecture by a detailed analysis of a few temples which by epigraphical or other chronological evidence can be proved to belong to that period; but they are too few in number and insufficiently important to determine the architectural characteristics of a creative epoch which was doubtless not less productive in architecture than it was in literature.

The Gupta period politically was an Indo-Aryan revival, for the Guptas were undoubtedly the representatives of the Aryan Kshatriya tradition and champions of the Aryan cause against Āryāvarta's adversaries of Turki, Hūn, Dravidian, and other alien descent. From the religious point of view it was marked by a Vaishnava propaganda in which Krishna, the Aryan hero of the Mahābhārata, was put forward as the exponent of Indo-Aryan teaching in opposition to the Buddhist doctrines, chiefly Mahāyānist, favoured by Āryāvarta's alien enemies. If Fergusson's conventional method of classification be applied to Gupta buildings we should therefore be justified in assuming that they would be characteristic of the spirit of the age and would be rightly catalogued as belonging to an 'Indo-Aryan style.'

But Fergusson's analysis of an 'Indo-Aryan style' conflicts entirely with this point of view. Its geographical limits corresponded with the country described as Āryāvarta, but he says, "No style is so purely local, and, if the term may be used, so aboriginal, as this."[1] And of its chief characteristic, the curvilinear steeple of the temple, known as the sikhara, he says: "Wherever a square tower-like temple exists with a perpendicular base, but a curvilinear outline above, there we may feel certain of the existence, past or present, of a people of Dāsyu extraction"—the Dāsyus being the non-Aryan, aboriginal races of India with whom the Aryans came into conflict. "No one," says Fergusson, "can accuse the pure Aryans of introducing this form into India, or of building temples at all, or of worshipping images of Siva or Vishnu, with which these temples are filled, and they consequently

[1] *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, vol. ii, p. 86.

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have little title to confer their name on the style. The Aryans had, however, become so impure in blood before these temples were erected, and were so mixed up with the aboriginal tribes whose superstitions had so influenced their religion and their arts, that they accepted their temples with their gods." [1]

Fergusson himself, though convinced of its aboriginal Indian or Dāsyu origin, left the symbolism of the sikhara unexplained and frankly confessed it to be a mystery to him. Other writers have tried to prove its derivation from the stūpa, but all archaeologists have accepted Fergusson's dictum that it was not introduced into India by the Aryans, and that the 'Indo-Aryan style' was a borrowed one.

It is most important for the understanding of the history of Aryan India to clear up the mystery of the derivation of the sikhara and its connection with early Aryan religion. No one can remain long in India and become familiar with its monuments without feeling that the innumerable temple spires of Northern India, essentially the same in every place whether the temple be Jain, Buddhist, Vaishnava, or Saiva, have much to tell us of the foundation of Aryan religious beliefs. The theory that the sikhara is derived from the stūpa seems to be untenable if only for the reason that at the most ancient sites of Buddhism, such as Sarnāth, the sikhara is found side by side with the stūpa, but quite as fully developed and as distinct from the latter both in structure and symbolism as it is at any later period. There are no transitional forms by which one can trace the passing of the stūpa into the sikhara. The sikhara may be square, octagonal, or circular in its base, but in the most ancient examples the amalaka, or the melon-shaped finial, which is its most striking characteristic, is never used on the stūpa dome. It is quite clear that the sikhara shrine as a symbol was meant to be the antithesis to or complement of the stūpa.

The stūpa is a reliquary or funeral monument—a symbol of death. The sikhara shrine we may therefore assume to be a symbol of life—or, using the terminology of modern Hinduism,

[1] *Op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 14.

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the stūpa is a *Saiva* symbol, the sikhara is a *Vaishnava* symbol. Starting with this hypothesis, that the sikhara as a symbol is connected with the Vaishnava cult, let us now endeavour to trace it back to its place in early Aryan life. The Vaishnava cult was undoubtedly Kshatriya in origin and closely connected with primitive hero-worship, or loyalty to the tribal traditions in the person of its chieftain. According to the Silpa-Sāstras the Vishnu-temple's place in the Aryan village was on the Rājapatha, the King's Road. It was the royal chapel, for Vishnu was the patron deity of the Kshatriya caste, and the amalaka which crowned it is the same as that which formed the capital of the royal standard, or Vishnu pillar, on which Asoka inscribed his edicts. It represents the fruit of the blue lotus (*Nymphaea cerulea*), Vishnu's flower, conventionally treated to indicate the partitions of the interior of the seed-capsule, or the spokes of the wheel of life. The Indo-Aryan king by his consecration as Vishnu's vicegerent on earth probably took rank as a Kshatriya whatever his family varna, or caste, might have been.

Now we find that other conspicuous features of Indian architecture were originally associated with secular rather than religious uses. The Amarāvatī sculptures show the *torana*, or arched entrance of Buddhist stūpas, in its original use as a town or village gateway, and the name *gopuram*, or cow-fort, of modern Hindu temples suggests its derivation from similar brick or stone gateways used as watch-towers for the protection of the Aryan villagers' cattle. The usual method of construction used for temple sikharas and their ornamentation convey a similar suggestion of the original use of the spire as a military watch-tower or fort. The interior of the spire is usually built up in stories, as may be seen from a ruined example at Khajurāho, and the decoration of the miniature sikharas found at Sarnāth [1] shows how each story was pierced on all sides by sun-shaped loopholes out of which the royal sentinels could watch the surrounding country and shoot

[1] See *The Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, by the author, Fig. 41, p. 97.

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11. Stele of Narām-Sin 180

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arrows at the approaching enemy. The wooden or bambu type of construction which was retained even when the material was brick or stone indicates that in their original secular use for the protection of the king's person the sikharas were often improvised when the army was in camp, and in such cases bambu would be universally used in India. The fact that the name *ratha*, or warrior's chariot, is sometimes applied to a temple *vīmāna*, and literally interpreted by the carving of stone wheels on the plinth of the mandapam, also suggests that the king's car was often similarly furnished with a bambu superstructure to distinguish it from the others, and to provide platforms for archers of the royal body-guard.

That such an improvised fort or armoured car might have been used by the Dāsyus who opposed the early Aryan invaders of India is quite possible; but as they have left no artistic record which can be used as evidence it is impossible to prove it. On the other hand, there are at least two important artistic documents of great antiquity which support the theory now put forward that the sikhara was used by the Aryans, both symbolically and practically, long before the days of Buddhism, and that it was not borrowed from the non-Aryan races of India. It is true that they cannot be described as Aryan documents, but both of them come from the Euphrates valley, from the time and the places when and where the Aryans, the devotees of Sūrya, were engaged in the struggle with their ancient foes, the Asuras, and they are good evidence of the original use of the sikhara as a royal fortress-tower.

The earliest of the two, dated by Mr H. R. Hall *circa* 2750 B.C., is the famous stele of the Semitic king Narām-Sin, already described.[1] Whether the conical tower which is so conspicuously shown in the stele is there used as a fort or a temple is not clear, but it is significant that the symbolism used is the same as that of the Indian sikhara; only Vishnu, the midday sun, instead of being represented by the blue lotus, is sculptured realistically immediately over the summit of the cone. The latter may have been formed by clay laid over a

[1] *Supra*, pp. 112–113.

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wooden or basket-work frame, as similar structures are built in the present day in the same locality, or it may have been only a skin tent. But the characteristic form and the symbolism make it extremely probable that here we have the prototype of the perfected Aryan sikhara, as shown in the miniature examples found at Sarnāth.

The other ancient illustration of the sikhara is figured in Layard's *Nineveh*,[1] and is there described as Sennacherib's palace. Here among a group of buildings, some with flat roofs and others with domes like that of a stūpa, are two sikharas, more structurally developed than in Narām-Sin's stele, though still of a primitive type. One of them has a square base, resembling the *garbha-grihya* or shrine of an Indian temple, and both of them are crowned by a finial which suggests the amalaka or a similar sun-symbol. On the summit of the adjacent mountain another Vishnu symbol appears, the flowering tree, contrasted with the cypress, the tree of eternity. It is also significant that in both of these ancient examples the sikhara is associated with a hill or mountain-top, the natural site for a king's or tribal chieftain's fort, which was always connected with the ritual and symbolism of the Vishnu cult.

In early Vedic times the Kshatriyas, not the Brahmans, were the spiritual leaders of the Aryan tribes, and the Aryan village or township, built for defensive purposes, like the medieval fortresses of Rājputāna, would have for its centre the Kshatriya chieftain's fort, crowned by a sikhara, outside which the tribal altar was raised. The Vedic rites connected with the worship of Sūrya, the patron deity of the Aryan warrior, were celebrated by the Kshatriya chieftain, and his fort with its tower and sun-shaped loopholes thus came to be regarded as a sacred shrine, and the chieftain himself as a delegate of the Sun-god, Sūrya. Hence the Rānas of Mewār, the representatives of the most ancient royal line of Aryan India, claim to be descendants, or sons, of Sūrya; and for the same reason the sun emblems, like the amalaka, were

[1] Second Series, Pl. XVI.

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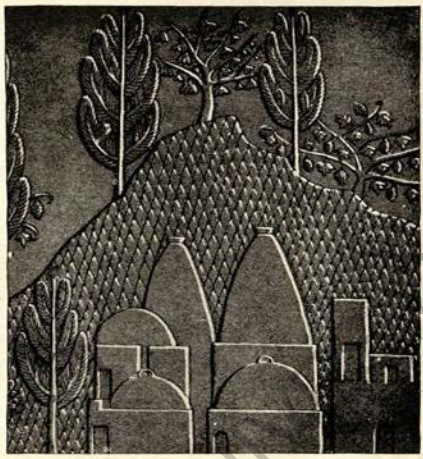

12. Palace of Sennacherib
at Nineveh

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placed upon the royal Aryan standards and upon the summit of the king's tent or fort.

In later Vedic times Sūrya-worship merged into that of Vishnu,[1] and assumed a profounder metaphysical aspect with the gradual development of the philosophy of the Upanishads. But the metaphysics of the cult of Vishnu always retained the symbolism derived from the ancient ritualistic practice. Vishnu is always represented with the regalia and arms of a Kshatriya king. The Vaishnava theory of *bhakti*, or devotion to God, grew out of hero-worship and the feeling of loyalty to the chieftain of the tribe. The incarnations of Vishnu were mostly metaphysical deductions drawn from the history of ancient Aryan heroes. The Western student must, however, be careful not to confuse the traditional ritualistic symbolism with the metaphysical ideas connected with them; or imagine that the Vaishnava cult is to be fully explained as the apotheosis of kingship combined with prehistoric mountain-worship.

If these conclusions are justified the fact that the sikhara is the most characteristic feature of the temple architecture of Āryāvarta, the modern Hindustan, and that it began to be prominent at the beginning of the Vaishnava propaganda of the Gupta period need no longer be regarded as a mystery, but as the natural sequence of its historical associations with the ancient Aryan ritual of the Kshatriyas. It must also follow that we must look for the characteristics of a Gupta style of architecture among the more ancient of the sikhara-crowned temples of Hindustan, like those of Bhuvanēsvar, and that the flat-roofed spireless temples which General Cunningham and others have cited as typical examples of the style must be placed in quite a different category. They are in fact Siva temples, and therefore represent a cult chiefly identified with Brahmanical caste-traditions, which did not come into political prominence until after the Gupta period, though like the Vishnu cult it had a history of great antiquity.

Apart from temple architecture the art of the Gupta period

[1] This is made clear by the most ancient images of Sūrya, which are practically identical with those of Vishnu, except for a slight variation of symbolism.

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is illustrated by some of the earlier halls and chapels of the splendid abbey of Ajantā, one of the great universities of the time. The fragments of the wonderful frescoes still remaining on the walls are not only masterpieces of painting, but, both in their vivid imagination and in their realistic portrayal of contemporary life, they give a striking impression of the masterful creative impulses which were then stirring the mind of India. In this respect they fully confirm the evidence of contemporary Sanskrit literature and Fa-Hien's graphic description of Indian life.

As records of the religious thought of the period they show clearly that the Buddha then, and probably long before that time, was not only recognised by Brahman theology as one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, but was actually worshipped as such by the Buddhists themselves, though their iconic symbolism and terminology were adapted to their own philosophical tenets. In the noble fresco of the marriage of Prince Siddhartha which decorates the front of the shrine in the first monastic hall—one of a series which are within or very near to the Gupta period—the Bodhisattva is represented holding Vishnu's blue lotus flower, and the two divine lovers, Siva and Pārvatī, watch the ceremony with benevolent interest from the heights of Mount Kailāsa. Mahāyāna Buddhism is here shown to be only one of the sectarian phases of the great Vaishnava movement of which all the Gupta emperors from Chandragupta to Bālāditya were the zealous patrons. The Saiva sculptures of Elephanta, which belong to the same artistic school, though perhaps of a somewhat later period,[1] reveal another sectarian phase of the same movement. Here the symbolism of the marriage of Siva and Pārvatī is a corollary of that of the marriage of Vishnu with the goddess Lakshmī, churned from the depths of the waters of life, and the majestic head of Vishnu which forms the centre of the Trimūrti sculpture is the Brahmanical counterpart of the head of the Bodhi-

[1] Fergusson's estimate of the date of the great temple—the eighth or ninth century—based only on evidence of 'style,' is in all probability several centuries too late.

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13. VISHNU SHRINE, BARWAR SAGAR, CENTRAL PROVINCES 184

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sattva in the Ajantā frescoes. The concept of the Three Aspects of the One—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva—represented symbolically from the Saiva point of view in the famous sculpture of Elephanta, was one of the fundamental, cosmological ideas upon which Indian theism, both Buddhist and Brahmanical, was based: its philosophical development was infinitely older than its first artistic representation, just as the Vedas were compiled ages before they were committed to writing.

Thus the sculptors and painters of the Gupta age have left to posterity a record of the synthesis of Indian thought corresponding exactly to that of the Gupta recension of the Mahābhārata, in which Krishna, as the incarnation of Vishnu, sums up the essence of Aryan religion in the Song of the Blessed One. The psychology of Indian history can never be understood by treating Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Jainism as water-tight compartments wholly independent of each other, as they are in the narrative of a zealous sectarian like Fa-Hien. Neither is it possible in this way to understand the tolerance shown by one sect towards another, nor how some of the Gupta emperors, without outraging the traditions of the dynasty, or the feelings of their subjects, could accept Buddhist teachers as their gurus and continue to display Brahmanical symbols in State ceremonial and official procedure.

Among the most interesting architectural monuments of the Gupta period is the so-called Vishvakarma Chaitya House at Ellora, which may be assigned to the sixth century. Vishvakarma was the Divine Architect, the Ishta-devata of the master-builder, and it is probable that this was the chapel of the guild of masons who resided at Ellora and for many generations devoted themselves to excavating all the wonderful shrines and monasteries along the crescent-shaped rocky precipice, which was sacred in the eyes of every Indian pilgrim, both by reason of its formation and on account of the great waterfall which flows over it.

If this were the masons' chapel of Ellora we have here a specially significant record of the great co-operative guilds

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which played so important a part in the social economy of India. The members of these technical corporations recognised no distinction of sect, so far as their business as craftsmen was concerned, and the Vishvakarma Chaitya House was in all probability the Guildhall of Ellora, not an ordinary chapter-house or Chaitya Hall for Buddhist monks. Unless one realises the non-sectarian character of Indian craft-traditions it is impossible to understand either the history of art in India or its affinities with the art of Europe: how, for instance, the traditions of the art of Gandhāra, originally pagan, became Buddhist under Kanishka, Christian under Constantine the Great, and Hindu under Vikrāmāditya in India.

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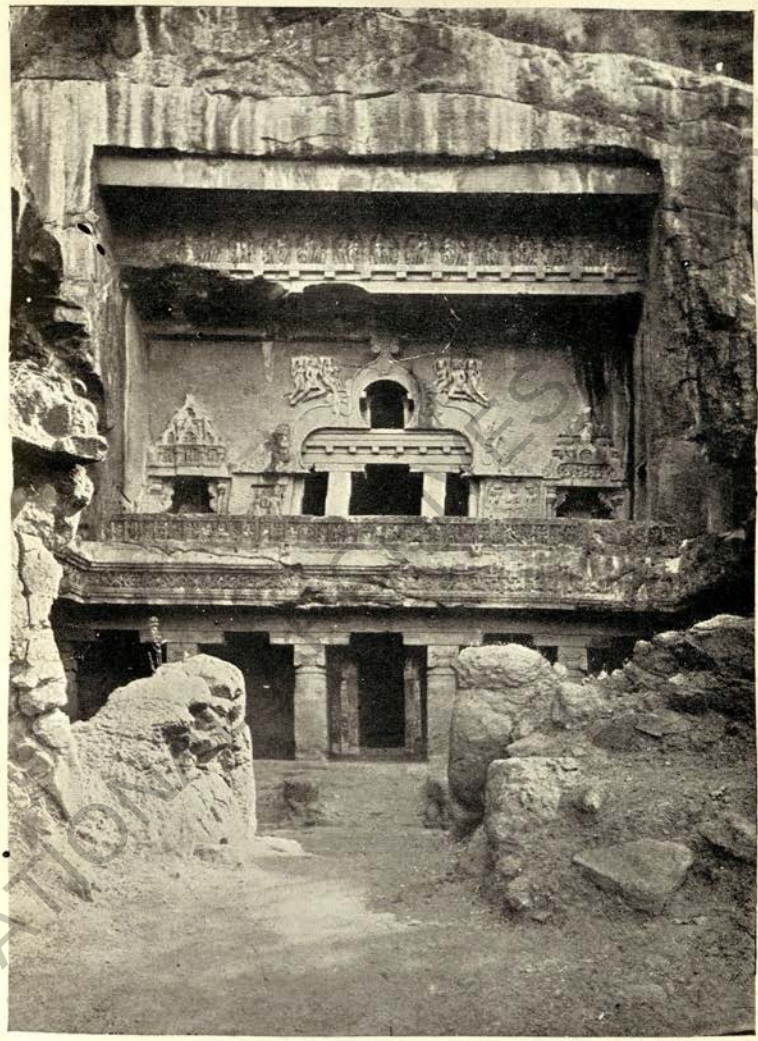

14. VISHVAKARMA CHAITYA HOUSE, ELLORA

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CHAPTER XIII

HARSHA AND THE HEGIRA

THOUGH the Gupta line did not become extinct until the early part of the eighth century the history of the dynasty ceases to have much interest after the middle of the sixth. The political disorder which followed the Hun invasions had led, as we have already seen, to the detachment of the western and north-western provinces of the Gupta Empire from the central power, some under the rule of Hunnish kings, and some under rulers of Turki or Indo-Aryan descent. The tendency of these disorders was to shift the centre of Indo-Aryan supremacy again further south, though for some centuries later the northern states were strong enough to check the foreign invader.

Little is known of Yasodharman, the rāja of Central India with whose aid Bālāditya had overthrown the savage despot Mihiragula, except that his court poet in a panegyric inscribed on two pillars of victory claimed for him an empire stretching from the Brahmāputra to the Arabian Sea, and from the Himālayas to Mahendragiri in Orissa. Court poems should not be taken too literally, but we can well believe that Yasodharman had much more energy and military capacity than the philosophic Gupta emperor, and that he took the leading part in the successful campaign against the Huns, for the clarion call to the Kshatriya warrior in the Bhagavad Gītā would not appeal strongly to a man of Buddhist sympathies.

But Yasodharman's reign was apparently a short one, and nothing is known of any other of his line. After the defeat of the Huns, the rājas of Valabhī, the capital of the province of Surashtra (Kāthiāwār), became independent and were known as great patrons of Buddhist learning until about 770,

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when the Arabs who had established themselves in Sind overthrew the dynasty. About the middle of the sixth century the Indo-Aryan states of the Dekhan, which had not taken a leading position since the middle of the second century—when the Andhra king distinguished himself by overthrowing the Sāka, Yavana, and Pahlavi tribes whose occupation of the Kāthiāwār province preceded that of the Huns—began to appropriate some of the departed glory of the Gupta Empire.

Pulakēsin I, a Rajput chieftain who claimed descent from the ancient Aryan dynasty of Ajodhyā, about 550 founded the Chālukyan Empire, which soon became powerful enough to prevent any northern state from reasserting its suzerainty over the kingdoms lying south of the Vindhya Mountains. For the next fifty years Indian political history is only a dull record of dynastic struggles which came to no decisive issue, until about 606 another strong man, Harsha-Vardhana of Thanēshar, a scion of the Gupta line, restored for a time the fortunes of Āryāvarta and once more brought peace and security to the people of Northern India. The history of his reign, which lasted forty years, is illuminated by the writings of another adventurous Chinaman, Hiuen-Tsang, who like his predecessor Fa-Hien undertook a pilgrimage to the Land of the Lotus of the Good Law in order to bring back to his country authentic records of the teaching of the Enlightened One.

Thanēshar, or Sthanēsvara, then capital of a small Rajput state, shared with Ajodhyā the fame of being the most holy ground of Āryāvarta, for it was built close to the famous battlefield of the Mahābhārata, Kurukshetra, upon which the divine Krishna had taught the hero Arjūna the duties of an Aryan warrior. The Rāja Prabhākara-Vardhana, Harsha's father, had taken an honourable part in the wars against the Huns, and other Mlechchha states adjoining his own, and it was in 604, while the Crown Prince Rājya-Vardhana, Harsha's elder brother, was leading a large army to attack the Huns on the north-west frontier, that the Rāja died. Harsha, who though only fifteen years old was in command of a reserve of cavalry which followed the royal army, immediately returned

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to the capital to act as regent in his brother's absence, and Rājya-Vardhana, on the conclusion of a successful campaign which justified his selection as Yuva-rāja, returned a few months afterwards and took his father's place on the throne according to Aryan law. But immediately afterwards, messengers from Kanauj having brought the news that his brother-in-law, the rāja of that state, had been slain by the Rāja of Mālwā—probably a Hun—and that his sister the Princess Rājasri had been thrown into prison like a common felon, the new Rāja of Thaṇēshar once more put himself at the head of his army and marched out to rescue his sister and avenge her husband's death, leaving Harsha in military command at the capital. The new campaign began with complete success. The Mālwā rāja was defeated in battle, but unfortunately the gallant Kshatriya king was inveigled into a trap by one of the enemy's allies and treacherously murdered. At the same time the Princess of Thanēshar escaped from her prison and fled with a few attendants to a forest hermitage in the Vindhya Mountains.

At this crisis Harsha was nominated by the State Council as his brother's successor. It may be presumed that Rājya-Vardhana's sons were for some reason unfitted to assume royal responsibilities, for they had no prescriptive right to the throne except as being the best qualified of the king's nearest relatives. The interests of the State always overruled family rights in this matter. According to the *Sukrā-nītisāra* (ii, 29–31) the choice of an heir-presumptive to the crown lay between the king's uncle, if younger than himself; a younger brother or son of his elder brother; his own son—or one treated as a son; an adopted child or daughter; or a sister's son, according to their relative qualifications.[1]

[1] Mr Vincent Smith suggests (*Early History of India*, pp. 310–311) that the State Council were acting unconstitutionally in setting aside the rights of Rājya-Vardhana's children, and that Harsha's nomination was due to court intrigues in which he himself was implicated. But under the circumstances the Council acted in accordance with Aryan law. Rājya-Vardhana had himself acknowledged his brother's claim by leaving him in command at his capital during his absence.

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It could not be disputed that in an emergency like this a military leader of acknowledged capacity was the best fitted to assume the duties of kingship, and Harsha was not long in proving his right, though his consecration as king was deferred till some years later—not, as Mr Vincent Smith assumes, because Harsha had been disloyal to his brother and did not dare to assert his right to the crown before that time, but because it was usual for an Aryan king-elect to justify his nomination in the eyes of his subjects before the solemn rite of consecration was performed. The new king's first act was to set out on the difficult task of finding his sister's hiding-place in the Vindhya Mountains. Guided by friendly aboriginal tribes he at length threaded his way through primeval forests to her retreat, just in time to prevent Rājasri and her companions from throwing themselves in despair upon the sacrificial fire as *satis*. That a devoted follower of the Buddha, as Rājasri was, should contemplate this act as a religious duty is further proof that the Law of the Sangha was an adjustment rather than a revolution in ancient Aryan thought. Hiuen-Tsang describes how later on he met the widowed princess at Harsha's court. She was, he says, a lady of rare intelligence, learned in the doctrines of the Hīnayānist Sammitiya school. But he succeeded in convincing both herself and her brother of the "narrow and erroneous ideas" of the Hīnayāna school, and henceforth they both became enthusiastic followers of the Greater Vehicle.

Harsha, like his sister, to whom he appears to have been deeply attached, was a pious Buddhist; but this did not make him forget the tradition of kingship which from the days of Chandragupta Maurya had made it every Kshatriya's desire to unite India into one great Aryan empire, or under one umbrella. It can hardly be doubted that this desire, implicit in the dharma of a king whatever his religious beliefs might be, was prompted by considerations of wise statesmanship and patriotic feeling and not merely by the lust of conquest. Harsha himself, according to Hiuen-Tsang, belonged to the Vaisya caste by birth. Whether this was a mistake or

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not there is good reason for believing that in those days personal qualifications often overruled distinctions of birth, and a Vaisya, or even a Sūdra, became a Kshatriya by the rite of consecration as king and was bound to regard the Kshatriya's dharma as his own.

So immediately after his sister's safety had been secured Harsha, with a force consisting of 5000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry, and 50,000 infantry, set out to punish the persecutor of the Sangha, the wicked King of Gaur—his brother's murderer—and to bring the 'Five Indies'[1] under allegiance to himself. The campaign, says Hiuen-Tsang, lasted six years, and in that time apparently Harsha brought the greater part of Northern India under his banner and had considerably augmented his military resources. The details of the campaign are not completely recorded, but Mālwā and Gaur were subdued, and before the end of his reign Harsha's rule was supreme in Āryāvarta from sea to sea, as far south as the Narbadā river, except over the kingdom of Gūrjara, which included Rājputāna, Northern Gujerat, and part of the Panjab. The growing strength of the southern states prevented him from repeating the exploits of Samudragupta; for the Chalukyan king, Pulakēsin II, about A.D. 620 successfully opposed his attempted passage of the Narbadā, and compelled him to give up all hopes of conquest in the Dekhan or Southern India.

With the exception of a few minor campaigns the rest of Harsha's reign was an unbroken peace. The court of Kanauj, the city which Harsha made his capital instead of Thanēshar, became famous for the philosophers, poets, dramatists, and painters upon whom the liberal patronage of Harsha and the Princess Rājasri was bestowed. Harsha himself had been thoroughly trained in all the accomplishments of Indo-Aryan royalty, and was equally skilful with the pen as with the sword. He was a poet of no mean merit, and his songs, set to music by himself, became popular throughout Āryāvarta.

[1] The 'Five Indies' were Svārasta (the Panjab), Kānyakubja (Kanauj), Gaur (Bengal), Mithilā (Durbhāngā), and Orissa. (D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 385.)

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Three Sanskrit plays attributed to him, the *Nāgānda*, the *Ratnāvalī*, and the *Priyadarsikā*, are still extant and reckoned among the best works the Indian drama has produced. He also wrote a treatise on Sanskrit grammar, and was a keen listener to the philosophical debates which always formed a part of the distractions of Aryan aristocracy. Though his patronage was principally bestowed upon Buddhists, he did not neglect the learned men of other sects, and a Brahman court poet, Bāna, was the author of an epic, the *Harsha-karita*, describing Harsha's campaigns and the events of his reign.

But it is to the learned Chinese Master of the Law, Hiuen-Tsang, that we are indebted for the most impartial and vivid account of India in the seventh century A.D. He was about twenty-nine years of age and already known as a learned and eloquent exponent of Mahāyānist doctrine when in 629 he set out on his pilgrimage to obtain further knowledge and authentic texts in the famous monasteries of India, especially with regard to the science of Yoga, which then apparently was treated as heretical by the Hīnayāna schools, though it formed one of the principal tenets of the Great Vehicle.

India, says Hiuen-Tsang, was known as the Land of the Moon. He gives a mystical explanation of the term, likening human existences since the sun of the Buddha set to a long dark night illumined only by the light given by a succession of wise and holy teachers. But India, or Āryāvarta, before the Buddha's time had been known as the land of King Soma, the Moon, and so called on account of its supposed resemblance in shape to the crescent moon, or 'digit' of the moon, a symbol long afterwards used for the standard of Islam. The night was the time for meditation, and an immemorial Aryan tradition had fixed the crescent-shaped bend of a river, or any similar land formation, as a holy place and the most auspicious site for a hermitage or Brahman asram. The cult of the night sky—Varuna or Vishnu-Nārāyana—and of Chandra, or Soma, had been the Brahman counterpart of

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the ancient sun-worship of the Kshatriyas represented by Indra or Vishnu-Sūrya.

Sixteen years elapsed before Hiuen-Tsang returned to his native land. A great part of that time was spent in the monasteries at Nālanda and other places, but the pilgrim gives vivid accounts of his adventures on the road and his experiences as an honoured guest at various royal courts. He also makes many observations on the character and condition of the people, and the state of the different parts of India he visited. The disorder created by the Hun invasions was shown by the dangers to which travellers were exposed by bands of outlaws. On one occasion the pilgrim and his companions were seized by river pirates. His fine figure and handsome face reminded them that the proper time for sacrifice to their dread goddess Dūrgā was at hand. Hiuen-Tsang was led to an improvised altar by two of the bandits with drawn swords, but his fearless mien so impressed his captors that they granted his request for a few moments' respite that he might pray to "enter into Nirvāna with a peaceful and happy mind." The pious Master of the Law then fixed his thoughts upon the Tusitā heavens and upon the Buddha that is to come, imploring Maitreya to descend to earth to instruct and convert his cruel captors and make them abandon their infamous profession. In the midst of his devotions a furious sandstorm arose which so terrified the brigands that when Hiuen-Tsang opened his eyes he found them kneeling at his feet begging forgiveness and instruction from one whose power over the spirits of the air proved him to be a deity. They then threw their weapons into the Ganges, restored the property they had stolen from Hiuen-Tsang and his fellow-travellers, and took leave of him vowing that thenceforth they would follow the teaching of the Good Law.

The conditions varied greatly in different parts of the country, but in the more settled districts, where a strong central government existed, Hiuen-Tsang, like his predecessor two centuries earlier, found good roads and free rest-houses with food and medical attendance provided for needy travellers

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and pilgrims. In other matters Hiuen-Tsang confirmed Fa-Hien's testimony with regard to the good government of the country. Taxes were light, the royal revenues being chiefly derived from the leasing of Crown lands. "Families are not registered, and individuals are not subject to forced labour contributions. Of the royal land there is a fourfold division: one part is for the expenses of government and State worship; one for the endowment of great public servants; one to reward high intellectual eminence; and one for acquiring religious merit by gifts to various sects. Taxation being light and forced service being sparingly used, every one keeps to his hereditary occupation and attends to his patrimony. The king's tenants pay one-sixth of the produce as rent. Traders go to and fro bartering their merchandise after paying light duties at ferries and barrier stations." [1]

Among the numerous anecdotes with which the Chinese pilgrim enlivens his memoirs is one which explains Indo-Aryan constitutional law with regard to the levy of royal taxes. Vikrāmāditya, King of Srāvastī, he says, after he had reduced the 'Five Indies' to submission was so lavish in the distribution of largesse to the poor and needy that his treasurer became alarmed and in a courtly way tried to bring home to the King what the result of his extravagance would be. He begged the King to double his largesse by distributing five lakhs more of gold coins among the poor from all quarters. Then the Treasury would be completely exhausted and new taxes would have to be imposed. This, said he, would bring to the King unbounded popularity, for he would have the people's gratitude for his generosity; but the ministers (*who would have the responsibility for imposing new taxes*) would bear the public insults and reproaches. The King paid no heed to the Treasurer's polite remonstrance, but taking him at his word gave an additional five lakhs to the poor. The moral of the story came as usual at the end, when Vikrāmāditya lost his kingdom and was succeeded by another king who "showed respect to men of eminence." [2]

[1] Watters' translation, vol. i, p. 176. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 211–212.

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It is interesting to note that voluntary service and not conscription was the method of recruitment for the imperial forces. "Those who are employed in the Government service are paid according to their work. They go abroad on military service or they guard the palace; summonses are issued according to circumstances, and after proclamation of the reward the enrolment is awaited." [1] This implies that men of the Kshatriya caste were not bound to render military service by reason of their birth, and though according to the law books the functions of royalty were reserved for the Kshatriyas it is questionable whether this implied more than that any Aryan freeman might become 'Kshatriya' by performing the dharma of that class of society. Among the kings mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang some were Brahmans, others were Kshatriya, Vaisya, or Sūdra. But a king certainly ranked as Kshatriya by virtue of his consecration in the rite of *Rājasūya*, when he was anointed by a representative of each of the 'twice-born' castes. There is no record of a king-elect being refused consecration on account of his being a Sūdra by birth.

Of the people of India Hiuen-Tsang speaks in terms of the highest respect and without narrow sectarian prejudice. He notices customs of Vaishnava and Saiva ascetics which are followed in the present day: "Some wear peacocks' tails; some adorn themselves with a necklet of skulls; some are quite naked; some cover their bodies with grass or boards; some pull out their hair and clip their moustaches; some mat their side-hair and make a top-knot coil. Their clothing is not fixed and the colour varies." [2]

Occasionally he was shocked by the "rude, bad ways and the low, vulgar speech" of the people, but generally they were fond of learning, well instructed, and most kindly disposed towards him. "They believed in the working of Karma and paid respect to moral and intellectual eminence." [3] He did not find all the virtues among his co-religionists: sometimes the most thorough believers were bigoted, quarrelsome,

[1] Watters' translation, vol. i, p. 176.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 148. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 301.

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vituperative, and of very shallow learning. Even among the non-Buddhist population he found people with honest, sincere ways, who applied themselves to learning and were fond of religious merit, though they sought the joys of this life." [1] Brahmans and Kshatriyas were "clean-handed and unostentatious, pure and simple in life, and very frugal." [2] The former kept their principles and lived continently, strictly observing ceremonial purity: the latter were the race of kings and had held sovereignty for many generations, and their aims were benevolence and mercy.

Fa-Hien hardly stopped to observe anything which was not Buddhist; but the more open-minded Hiuen-Tsang gives much information regarding the different religious sects. Buddhism though it counted the great King Harsha among its followers by no means enjoyed a monopoly either of temporal or spiritual power. The King of Assam, one of Harsha's principal vassals, was an orthodox Brahman. There were but few Buddhists left in Gandhāra, and its once flourishing towns and villages were desolate. The Jains were influential in Southern India. Pātaliputra, Asoka's capital, was mostly in ruins. Gayā had but few inhabitants. The great Bodhi Tree there had been uprooted by the wicked King Sasanka, who murdered Harsha's brother, but the Rāja of Pātaliputra, Purnavarma, the last descendant of Asoka's line, had replanted it and built a stone wall to protect it.

Hiuen-Tsang has much to say about educational matters, both with regard to popular instruction and the higher learning of the monasteries. Brahman and Buddhist teachers vied with each other in devotion to their duties. The brethren of the Sangha often met together to sharpen their wits in intellectual contests and to promote the moral aims of their Order. Those who most distinguished themselves by profound learning and dialectical skill were given precedence and special privileges—the highest being the honours accorded to royalty, or the grant of a richly caparisoned elephant and a large retinue

[1] Watters' translation, vol. i, p. 330.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 151.

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of monks to attend on them. On the other hand, those who only displayed their ignorance and broke the rules of the Order might be ignominiously expelled from the monastery with their faces daubed with red and white clay and their bodies covered with dirt. Learning, however, was not the monopoly of the Buddhist monks or Brahmans. A man who delighted in wisdom could study diligently at home and be a monk or layman as he pleased.[1]

There was an organised system of popular education. Children began by learning the alphabet and the *Siddhan*, or *Siddhi-astu*, a primer containing twelve chapters. At seven years of age they passed on to the study of the 'Five *Sāstras*,' or sciences, beginning with grammar. The second Sāstra was "the science of arts and crafts," the third medical science, the fourth logic, and the fifth the principles of philosophy. All these departments of knowledge formed a system of general education for laymen of all sects. In theory, at least, Indian educationists of the seventh century A.D. seem to have devised a system of public instruction far superior to that of the present day.

The method of teaching was oral. Hiuen-Tsang praises the earnestness and diligence of the teachers, Brahman as well as Buddhist. They began by explaining the general meaning of the lesson; then they carefully analysed the details, point by point. They inspired their pupils to exert themselves, and skilfully led them forward step by step. "They instruct the inert and sharpen the dull." They took pains even with idle shirkers, doggedly repeating instruction until their disciples were fully qualified. This was not, however, generally achieved before the latter were thirty years of age—then "their minds were settled and they went into office: and the first thing they do is to reward the kindness of their teachers."[2] Hiuen-Tsang gives high praise to the wandering bhikkus or sādhus, men deeply versed in antique wisdom and possessing the culture accumulated by constant travel, who, though some-

[1] Watters' translation, vol. i, p. 162.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 160.

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times belonging to wealthy families, were content to live a life of poverty apart from the world unmoved by honour or reproach. "For them there is honour in knowing truth and no disgrace in being destitute." [1] Wandering continually from place to place, no fatigue was too great when an opportunity offered of gaining knowledge, or of using their own for helping others. Those who were famed for their wisdom were treated with the highest respect; but not even the honours which kings could bestow tempted them to forsake the path of knowledge. The influence of these pious men must have been felt far beyond the borders of India, for they recognised no political barriers nor any distinctions of race.

The great monasteries described by Hiuen-Tsang were Buddhist, but they were real universities of learning and non-sectarian so far that in some cases followers of the main divisions—the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna—dwelt together in the same monastery. Some were famous for particular sciences, like Taksha-silā for its school of medicine, and Ujjain for astronomy. Nālanda, where Hiuen-Tsang stayed some years, was the Oxford of Mahāyāna Buddhism; the rival of Benares, which was the stronghold of orthodox Brahmanical learning. Nevertheless it was entirely eclectic in its teaching, for the eighteen Hīnayāna sects were represented there, and among the different recognised branches of learning were included the Vedas, medicine, and mathematics. The resident monks took precedence according to the range of their study rather than their excellence in one particular branch. Among the ten thousand within and without the walls, one thousand were accounted proficient in ten works upon the Sutras and Sāstras; five hundred had graduated in thirty; ten only, including Hiuen-Tsang himself, in fifty; while the venerable Abbot, Sīlabhadra, was reputed master of every work which had any bearing upon the knowledge of the Right Law.

The wandering bhikkus had carried reports of the Chinese pilgrim's great learning from monastery to monastery through-

[1] Watters' translation, vol. i, p. 162.

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out Magadha, so that on approaching Nālanda he was met by a deputation sent by the Abbot, and was accompanied to the gates of the monastery by an imposing escort carrying banners and State umbrellas and burning incense. He was garlanded and ceremoniously invited to be a guest of the monastery, and then conducted to the presence of the Abbot, the venerable Śīlabhadra, "the Treasure of the Right Law," who received him with the utmost kindness and assigned to him sumptuous quarters and an ample supply of fruit and other provisions, including a special kind of rice of very large grain and fine flavour which was cultivated only in Magadha and reserved exclusively for the cuisine of royalty and of monks of great distinction who were accorded royal honours.

The monastery, says Hiuen-Tsang, had been originally a mango orchard—no doubt with a garden mansion attached to it—belonging to a rich landowner, which had been purchased for a large sum by five hundred merchants who were disciples of the Buddha, and presented to the Master. The Buddha himself had lived there for three months preaching to his merchant disciples, many of whom had thus obtained the fruit of the Bodhi Tree. Five successive kings had added to its buildings and endowments, so that now it was the largest and richest of all the monasteries of India. The last of its royal benefactors had enclosed all the different buildings by a high wall.

Hiuen-Tsang, in flowery language, describes the high towers "piercing the mists of the morning," from the windows of which one could watch the glowing sunset and meditate on the serene beauty of the moonlight. The numerous pillared halls and pavilions were richly carved and painted, filled with precious shrines and glowing with colour and brilliant jewelled adornment. In the gardens the thick groves of mango trees afforded a grateful shade, while the kanaka trees (*Butea frondosa*) with their festoons of brilliant red flowers, the fountains and serpentine canals of clear water filled with blue lotuses, were more beautiful than he had seen anywhere. The monasteries of India, he said, could be counted in thousands, but none

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equalled Nālanda in the grandeur, richness, and loftiness of its construction.

The discipline maintained by the monks was so admirable that there was no record of any infringement of the rules in the seven hundred years since the abbey had been founded: the brethren of Nālanda were looked up to by all India both for their conduct and learning. There the days were all too short for study and discussion: "day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection." The revenue of a hundred villages had been assigned by the State for the endowment of the abbey, so that the monks and their disciples were well provided with the necessaries of life, and the instruction given was gratuitous. Many foreign students came there, attracted by the fame of the university and by the prestige they could win by using its name in their own country, but the standard of learning was so high that few succeeded in gaining admittance to the advanced debating schools.

It was while Hiuen-Tsang was at Nālanda studying the *Yoga-śāstra* and other works under the direction of the learned Abbot that he was invited by Bhaskaravarma, or Kumāra, the King of Kāmarūpa (Assam and Eastern Bengal), one of Harsha's most powerful allies, to pay a visit to his court. This king was an orthodox Brahman, but, true to the traditions of his caste, he treated all learned men with respect, and the colleges of his country, like Nālanda, attracted students from many quarters, though Buddhism did not prosper there. The monks of Nālanda implored Hiuen-Tsang to remain, but after the Abbot had received several urgent letters from Kumāra he reluctantly gave his consent, and so the pilgrim packed up his precious collection of manuscripts and images, took leave of his beloved Alma Mater, and went. Kumāra had heard of Hiuen-Tsang's profound scholarship from a Brahman who had presumed to challenge the Chinese doctor, and had been compelled to acknowledge his inferiority in debate. Hiuen-Tsang was received by the King and his ministers with the highest honours and installed as a guest

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in the royal palace, where he was entertained lavishly for a month and overwhelmed with valuable presents.

In the meantime Harsha had received information that Hiuen-Tsang, who had previously declined several invitations to attend the imperial court, was now Kumāra's guest, and immediately sent a peremptory message to his vassal to despatch the learned Chinese monk to Kanauj at once. Kumāra fairly replied, "I would rather send my head than let your Majesty have the Master of the Law," but when the imperial messenger returned with a demand for the fulfilment of Kumāra's first offer he saw it was no joking matter and set out to accompany Hiuen-Tsang in royal state to Kanauj himself. Harsha was touring in his dominions and met the procession on its way to his capital, and was not less lavish than his vassal had been in the honours he bestowed upon Hiuen-Tsang, only reproaching him gently for not having come at his first invitation. "Master," said he, "your disciple invited you to come before. Why did you not come?" "I journeyed to far countries," replied Hiuen-Tsang, "to find the Law of the Buddha. I was studying the *Yoga-chārya-bhūmi-Sāstra* when your Majesty's order came, but I had not finished hearing the explanation of it. That is why I did not come immediately to pay my respects to your Majesty." Harsha accepted the explanation as satisfactory, and then proceeded to question Hiuen-Tsang on a subject which interested both Kumāra and himself deeply—the origin of a celebrated Chinese song and dance known as "The Music of Ch'in-Wang's Victory" and "The Dance of the Seven Virtues," composed to celebrate the suppression of a formidable rebellion in 619,[1] and thereafter performed on great occasions at the Chinese imperial court.

Hiuen-Tsang gives a pleasing account of Harsha's personal character and his life as a sovereign ruler. He was indefatigable in the discharge of his administrative duties, spending most of the year in making tours of inspection throughout his dominions, setting a good example to his ministers and to the

[1] Watters' translation, vol. i, pp. 349–350.

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kings who were his vassals, and showing favour only to those who were as zealous as himself in good works. Like Asoka he forbade the killing of animals for food, and built thousands of stūpas and monasteries besides travellers' rest-houses and similar benevolent institutions. He was lavish in the distribution of alms to religious devotees of all sects. At the royal lodges a thousand Buddhist monks and five hundred Brahmans were fed every day. The chapter-houses and assembly halls were furnished with supplies and decorated with sculpture and painting. Over the affairs of the Sangha, as in other official matters, he kept strict control. Besides the great Quinquennial Assembly which was regularly held, the Sangha was called together yearly for discussion and examination, for the reward of moral and intellectual merit and the punishment of offenders against the rules of discipline.

In the early part of his reign Harsha, like his sister—who is said to have assisted him in the administration of the empire—inclined to the doctrines of the Little Vehicle; but a treatise which Hiuen-Tsang wrote and presented to the Emperor convinced both of them of the superior merit of Mahāyānist teaching, and he immediately gave orders that a General Assembly of the Order should be summoned to the capital, Kanauj, so that the Master of the Law might argue the matter with all the religious teachers of his realm. The Assembly thus convoked was a great State function attended by the Emperor and his whole court, and by eighteen tributary kings who responded to the summons. There were two thousand Brahman and Jain pandits, and four thousand representatives of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teaching, including about a thousand monks from the Nālanda monastery. Some of these great church dignitaries were mounted on elephants, others were carried in palanquins; they were attended by a numerous suite with banners, standards, and other ecclesiastical paraphernalia. The multitude which thronged to listen to the debate was immense.

An imposing pavilion covered with thatch was erected for the learned members of the convocation, and a great image

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of the Buddha, equal in stature to the Emperor, was placed under a lofty thatched tower adjoining it. From the description we may infer that this temporary shrine was a royal travelling lodge covered by a sikhara, like a Vishnu temple, and that the convocation met in a great mandapam built in front of it. The Emperor's camp was pitched at some distance from the place of assembly. On the appointed day, early in A.D. 644, a golden image of the Buddha, specially wrought for the occasion, was placed in a jewelled shrine upon the back of a gorgeously caparisoned elephant. The Emperor himself, attired as the guardian Deva of the Kshatriya caste, Indra, held one of the emblems of royalty—a yak-tail fly-flap—over the image on the right hand, while his ally, the Brahman King Kumāra, personifying the Ishta-devata of his own caste, Brahmā, held a State umbrella over it on the other side. The Master of the Law and the ministers of State, also mounted on elephants, rode behind, and, joined by the splendid procession of the tributary rājas, the stately pageant moved on to the place of the assembly, Harsha and Kumāra scattering largesse of gold, pearls, and other precious substances along the route.

At the gate of the grand pavilion Harsha and the rest of the imperial procession dismounted, and the sacred image was placed upon a throne prepared for it with the usual religious ceremonial, at which the Emperor assisted as high priest. Then the distinguished members of the convocation were conducted to their seats, and after refreshments had been served and presents distributed Harsha invited Hiuen-Tsang to take his seat as president and open the debate.

It is hardly necessary to say that the effect of his discourse was entirely satisfactory to the adherents of the Mahāyānist school. Hiuen-Tsang's eloquence, supported by the Emperor's presence, was overpowering. The learned Master of the Law, anticipating Luther, nailed his thesis to the gateway of the pavilion as a challenge to his opponents with a postscript at the foot of it—"If anyone here can find a single wrong argument and can refute it I will let him cut off my head"—a

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formula which appears to have been a part of the tradition of these public disputations. No one ventured to take up the challenge, and Hiuen-Tsang remained in possession of the field until the evening, when Harsha returned to his camp delighted. If the Chinese pilgrim and his biographer can be trusted the same programme was repeated for eighteen days, to the utter confusion of all heretics and the joy of the Mahāyānists. But one account avers that the convocation was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the pavilion being set on fire by Hiuen-Tsang's opponents, and by an attempt on the Emperor's life by an armed fanatic, in consequence of which some of the conspirators were executed and five hundred Brahmans were expelled from Harsha's dominions.

Whichever may be the true account, Harsha's esteem for the Chinese Master was only increased by his conduct of the Great Assembly. Hiuen-Tsang would not receive the marks of imperial favour offered him lavishly in the form of money and costly presents, but accepted an invitation to accompany Harsha to a great national festival held every five years at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna. The tradition of the sacredness of the place, due to the crescent-shaped formation of the land where the two holy rivers united, went back to the earliest Vedic times; and the quinquennial distribution of royal bounty which was a part of the religious ceremonial probably had its origin in the ancient custom of the Dravidian forest settlement by which the redistribution of the communal lands took place every five years.

The vast sandy plain to the west of the confluence had been known from time immemorial as 'the Place of Alms'; for charity bestowed upon that spot had for the giver many thousand times the merit of a similar act elsewhere. In this hallowed place it had been Harsha's custom every five years since his accession to distribute all the surplus of his treasury. The ceremony to which Hiuen-Tsang was invited was the sixth distribution. A great square space was marked off by stakes joined with festoons of roses, as in a Vedic sacrifice, and in the centre under a number of thatched sheds was piled

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15. Trimūrti Sculpture, Elephanta

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a vast quantity of treasure, gold and silver work and jewellery wrought by the royal craftsmen. Surrounding these were long sheds filled with all kinds of costly fabrics, broçades, silks, and fine cottons, besides heaps of gold and silver coin. Outside this quadrangle were a hundred pavilions ranged in long lines for the distribution of food, each pavilion seating a thousand persons. An imperial decree invited to the feast religious devotees of all sects, and all the poor and needy in the 'Five Indies.'

A few weeks after the conclusion of the convocation at Kanauj, Harsha with the Princess Rājasri, with Hiuen-Tsang and the kings of the eighteen tributary states in his train, arrived at 'the Place of Alms,' where a great concourse of Buddhist, Brahman, and Jain ascetics and poor laymen numbering half a million had assembled. The first three days of the festival were devoted to the worship of the Three Aspects of the One—the Trimūrti. On the first day the *rājasic* Aspect, represented by the Buddha, whose image was installed in a temporary shrine built upon the sands, was worshipped, the religious rites being accompanied by music, the offering of flowers, and the formal dedication of the most precious of the costly presents from the imperial treasury. On the second day, with similar rites, the *sattvic* Aspect of the Trimūrti, represented by Vishnu under the name of Adityā, received adoration, and on the third day the *tamasic* Aspect, Siva, was worshipped.

On the fourth day the distribution of the treasure thus solemnly dedicated to the service of God began. About 10,000 Buddhist monks were fed, and each one received 100 pieces of gold, a pearl, a cotton garment, and gifts of flowers and perfumes. The Brahmans were the next recipients of Harsha's bounty, the distribution lasting twenty days. Twenty days more were given to presenting gifts to Jain devotees and those of other sects, while another month passed away before all the destitute orphans and other poor laity had received their gifts. By that time, says Hiuen-Tsang, all the surplus of the imperial treasury accumulated in the last five years

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had been exhausted. There only remained the horses and elephants and the military accoutrements of the imperial forces which were necessary for maintaining order in the State. Harsha then began, in imitation of the Sākya Prince at the hour of the Great Renunciation, to take off his imperial tiara, necklet of pearls, jewelled earrings and bracelets, and to divest himself of his magnificent brocaded vesture, to add them to the treasure already distributed as alms. Then, begging from the Princess Rājasri a common worn garment, such as an ascetic might wear, he put it on and worshipped "the Buddhas of the ten regions," rejoicing that his riches were no longer hidden in a solid and impenetrable storehouse but scattered broadcast on the "field of divine merit."

At the close of the great festival the eighteen kings purchased the imperial regalia, vestments, and other costly presents from the persons upon whom they had been bestowed, and offered them to Harsha as the tribute due to him; but in a few days' time the Emperor had again distributed the most valuable in alms.

When the time came for Hiuen-Tsang's departure both Harsha and Kumāra begged insistently that he should remain in India, but finding that he could not be turned from his purpose of spreading the knowledge of the Right Law in his native country they accompanied him along a part of the road and then, having provided him with ample means for the long journey, regretfully allowed him to proceed to the frontier under the protection of a royal escort. Hiuen-Tsang reached home in the early part of A.D. 645, with most of the precious relics, images, and manuscripts he had collected, and lived to translate seventy-four important Sanskrit works into Chinese. He died in 664, nineteen years after his return from India.

The record which he left of his travels, which must, of course, be read with due allowance for the pilgrim's religious partisanship and for the mistakes both of his biographer and of the latter's transcribers, gives the impression of a remarkably keen and close observer, and is one of the most trustworthy

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historical documents of the period. It is invaluable for the light it throws upon Harsha's administration both in secular and religious matters, and upon the psychology of Indian life in the seventh century. One important historical fact comes out clearly in his narrative—that the General Assembly of the Sangha was not, as might be supposed, 'Buddhist' in the sectarian sense of modern writers, but a real Parliament of religions representative of all important schools of thought, Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical. And the real authority exercised by this Assembly in religious matters is shown by the fact that Harsha in his zeal for propagating Mahāyānist doctrines did not attempt to use his power arbitrarily in the manner of the 'Oriental despot,' but sent his chosen guru, the Master of the Law, to argue the matter before the great pandits of the 'Five Indies.' It was the decision of this Assembly, after a long formal debate, which was ratified by Harsha in an imperial decree.

Whether the Assembly was obsequious and did not dare to lift up its voice against the Emperor's emissary, whether Harsha tried to pack the Assembly and to prejudice its decision by methods well known even in the most democratic states of modern times, are irrelevant issues in deciding the principles of Indo-Aryan government and the methods employed in practising them. Another striking characteristic of Indian political life is the extraordinary deference shown by military rulers to the authorised exponents of national culture, the professional pandits. Europeans are accustomed in modern times to the spectacle of a coterie of State professors employed in explaining and justifying every act of a dominant military caste. But these modern professors of *Kultur*, however great their personal intellectual influence may be, hold a strictly subordinate position in the whole social system and never dare to assert any authority beyond the narrow sphere allotted to them by the State. In medieval times we have known many dignitaries of the Church competing on the battlefield for the control of the temporal arm and exercising the highest authority by virtue of the spiritual terrors they could invoke;

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but there is no parallel in European history to the influence exercised by Indian philosophers in every grade of society, from the highest to the lowest, solely by reason of their superior intellectual qualities and personal virtues. The acknowledged champion in a great philosophical debate received, both before and after death, public honours as great as the warrior could win by a victorious campaign. There could be no better proof that the ethics of the State in ancient India were not entirely dictated by the sword, and that 'the humanities' had at least as high a place in national life as they hold in the civilisation of modern Europe. Neither in this matter is it necessary to inquire whether the extravagant respect accorded to men of learning tended to weaken the military strength of the State, or whether the exaltation of the scholar above the man of action confined economic progress to a very narrow groove. No civilisation in the world's history can be said to have achieved perfection, but the fact remains that, judged by standards of culture, Indian civilisation in the seventh century A.D. attained to a height which has not been exceeded by any other in ancient or modern times.

Harsha's reign was also memorable for an epoch-making event, usually considered as outside the range of Indian history, the Hegira, which took place in 622. While that great religious impulse which had its centre in Magadha was bringing pilgrims from the Far East to study in the universities of India, an Arab teacher in Western Asia, fired by similar zeal, was calling on his fellow-tribesmen to join him in the worship of the One God and in the propagation of the truth of which Muhammad was the Prophet. Western criticism has been content to regard the event as a separate episode in the religious history of the world, and by divorcing it from its historical context to misrepresent its true spiritual significance.

The process of the spiritual evolution of the human race becomes totally inexplicable if all the great world-religions are considered as mutually antagonistic and wholly autochthonous in origin. If the position of each religion in the general progress of mankind were estimated by its influence upon the

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civilisation of different races, instead of by dogmatic values, it would become obvious that every race, or racial group, must strive to discover the particular spiritual formula best adapted for the stage of evolution in which it finds itself, instead of seeking to establish the absolute superiority of one set of formulas over another. If Muhammad had been preaching to the General Assembly of the Sangha at Kanauj, instead of to the Arab tribes, the dogmas of Islam would certainly have been stated differently. It was not the philosophy of Islam, but its sociological programme, which won so many converts for it in India.

Muhammad was a poet rather than a philosopher, and in the poetic frenzy of the Qurān there is no evidence that the Prophet of Mecca drew direct inspiration from the deeply reasoned psychology which formed the original basis of the Law of Buddha. But in the seventh century A.D. the psychological influence of Buddhism, especially outside India, was less dependent upon its philosophical teaching than upon the depth of the religious fervour which the spirit of bhakti evoked. The example of right living and right thinking which had been set by generations of the Buddha's devout disciples had been an inspiration to many religious teachers before Muhammad. The spiritual impulse of which India had been the centre for over a thousand years was independent of dogmas and philosophies. It was borne along the highways of commerce, by sea and land, to the furthest confines of Asia both in the east and west. And though the echoes of the debating halls of India may not have resounded upon the coasts of Arabia so clearly as they did among the hills of the further East, the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead implicit in the theory of the One in Many was probably as familiar to the camel-drivers of Arabian caravans as it was to the students of China long before the Prophet raised the banner of Islam.

Muhammad was an inspired teacher who skilfully adapted his theological formulas to Arabian tribal traditions, in the same way as the Buddha had established the Law upon the traditions of the Indo-Aryan village community. If he was

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not as familiar with Indian religious thought as he was with the teaching of Christianity he certainly caught the spirit of bhakti which was common to them both. The conflict between Islam and Hinduism was chiefly on matters of ritual, like the disputes in the Christian Church. On higher spiritual grounds the Brahman pandit and the mullā easily found a *modus vivendi*, for India was a motherland to them both.

Hiuen-Tsang gives some indication of the western extension of Buddhism in his time by the mention he makes of Hīnayāna monasteries in Persia. Alberuni, the Arabian historian of the eleventh century, states that "in former times Khurāsan, Persia, 'Irāk [Mesopotamia], Mosul, and the country up to the frontiers of Syria were Buddhistic." [1]

In the seventh century A.D. Japan was the furthest outpost of Indo-Aryan religion in the East: it is more than probable that Mecca, a town closely connected with Indo-Arabian coasting trade, was one of its outposts in the West. The iconoclastic rage which animated the Prophet and his disciples indicates that the ritual of Hīnayāna Buddhism,[2] which doubtless retained more of its pristine simplicity and austerity in its outlying mission fields than it did in India itself, appealed more strongly to the Arab tribesmen than the exuberant symbolism of the Mahāyānist school. It was upon Mahāyānists in particular that the fury of the onslaught of Islam vented itself in India, though Arab historians in recording the wholesale destruction of monasteries and temples which marked the progress of the Musalman invaders were indifferent to distinctions of sect. 'Bauddha temples' was a contemptuous term applied to all Indian places of worship.

Already in Harsha's time the conquering Arabs had advanced as near to India as Balūchistān, then part of the dominions of

[1] *Alberuni's India*, translated by E. G. Sachau, vol. i, p. 21.

[2] The Buddha forbade "imaginative drawings painted in figures of men and women," but allowed the bhikkus to draw and paint "representations of wreaths and creepers, and bone hooks and cupboards" (*Chullavagga*, vi, 3, 2). (The latter category no doubt refers to the names of traditional patterns.) Thus Muhammadan law was practically identical in this respect with that of Hīnayāna Buddhism.

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the Buddhist Rāja of Sind, Dīwājī, who lost his life in opposing them. In 646 Sāhasī, Dīwājī's grandson, met the same fate, and early in the eighth century the Arabs had overrun Sind and established themselves there permanently. But it was not until two centuries later that the great Muhammadan invasion which ended in the conquest of the greater part of India began. The first Arab invasions were the attacks of religious enthusiasts whose only philosophy was the sword: in the subsequent invasions plunder and the lust of conquest were the primary motives with the great majority of the followers of Islam, as they had been with the Hellenic, Turki, and Scythian marauders of former times.

The artistic history of Harsha's reign, so far as the north of India is concerned, is a continuation of that of the Gupta period. Vishnu's sikhara continued to be the characteristic feature of temple architecture, whether the sectarian dedication of it were Buddhist, Jain, or Brahmanical. The temple of Parasurāmēsvar at Bhuvanēsvar, which probably belongs to the seventh century, may be taken as a typical building of the period. The Duma Lena at Ellora, which is almost an exact copy on a larger scale of the Elephanta temple, may have been partly excavated in Harsha's time, though Ellora, like Ajantā, was beyond the southern boundaries of Harsha's dominions and came under Pulakēsin's jurisdiction. The noble sculptural façade of the adjoining Ramēsvaram temple is also typical seventh-century work.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE DEKHAN AND SOUTHERN INDIA FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURIES

HARSHA died in 648, a few years after the departure of Hiuen-Tsang from Kanauj. His death was the signal for fresh political troubles in Northern India; but before continuing the dynastic history of the North it is necessary to turn our attention to the Dekhan, where Pulakēsin II, Harsha's powerful rival, ruled from about 610. The Chalukyan dynasty, of which Pulakēsin was the fourth representative, was said, as before stated, to be of Rajput, or Kshatriya, descent, and the inhabitants of Mahārāshtra, the chief province of Pulakēsin's dominions, were, says Hiuen-Tsang, warlike and proud-spirited, "grateful for favours and revengeful for wrongs, self-sacrificing towards suppliants in distress and sanguinary to death with any who treated them insultingly. Their martial heroes who led the van of the army in battle went into conflict intoxicated, and their war-elephants were also made drunk before an engagement. Relying on the strength of his heroes and elephants, the King treated neighbouring countries with contempt." [1]

Pulakēsin's reign began and ended with wars, offensive and defensive. On his northern frontier he successfully opposed Harsha's attacks; on the south he was constantly struggling with the Pallava King of Kānchi, Narasimhavarman; and in the east he held the Kalinga power in check. About 630 Pulakēsin exercised suzerainty over the greater part of Southern India, including the Chola, Pāndya, and Kerala kingdoms. He

[1] Watters' translation, vol. ii, p. 239.

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also entered into diplomatic relations with Kushrau II, King of Persia—perhaps for the purpose of checking Harsha's ambitions—an event which is supposed to be recorded in one of the fresco paintings of the monastic hall at Ajantā now known as Cave I.

But the main interest of the history of the seventh century in the Dekhan and Southern India is centred in the rise of Saivism, the school of philosophy which then began to dominate the religious thought and architecture of the South as Vaishnavism was taking the lead in the North. We have already seen how Vaishnavism was essentially a Kshatriya cult, a philosophical development of the idea of the king as the protector and father of his people, and having its architectural symbol in the tower of the king's fortress palace idealised into a temple of Vishnu, the Preserver of the Universe. Saivism was the corresponding cult of the Brahman ascetic, opposing to the Vaishnava ideal an austere and pessimistic view of life which only regarded the vanity of human existence, the impermanence and unreality of natural phenomena. It is, however, as great a mistake to suppose that Saivism originated in the seventh century as to suppose that Vaishnavism began in the fourth or fifth; and a still greater error to accept the dictum of archaeological writers that Saivism is a Dravidian superstition assimilated and adapted by Brahmanism. It is doubtless true that many gross superstitions fastened themselves upon the external forms of Saiva religion—such is the case with all religions—but the esoteric ideas of Saivism are as purely Aryan in their origin as those of Buddhism and certainly not less ancient.

Both Vaishnavism and Saivism have their root in the very beginnings of Aryan religion. Buddhism in the sixth century B.C. was a compromise accepted for a time by the great majority of Aryan thinkers, Vaishnava and Saiva, though in its pessimistic view of life and in its ritualistic symbolism early Buddhism inclined more to the Saiva ideal. But even in early Buddhism it is easy to distinguish the two ideals—the Buddha as King and Protector and the Buddha as the Seer and Ascetic:

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the two types of miniature votive shrines strewn in hundreds among the *débris* of Sarnāth bring out the difference clearly. The sikhara type is the offering of the pious layman, the stūpa type that of the monk or devotee. The distinction became more marked within the Sangha itself when the Vaishnava, or Mahāyāna, section of the Order detached itself from the Saiva, or Hīnayāna, about the beginning of the Christian era. Up to this time the General Assembly or Parliament of religions which regulated the spiritual affairs of Āryāvarta was entirely non-sectarian in the sense that it represented all denominations except the small minority of extremists and irreconcilables. There was no doubt a Kshatriya or Brahman opposition, not influential enough to control the debates, though sufficiently important to make its voice heard and to shape the policy of the Assembly. But in course of time the philosophical creed of this party became more defined, and having been formulated in the Bhagavad Gītā it was adopted by the first Gupta emperors as the authorised Vaishnava doctrine. The fourth century A.D. may therefore be taken as the approximate period of the formation of the new Vaishnava party with a clear constructive programme in opposition to both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna policy, though it was evidently less widely separated from the former than from the latter. From the fourth to the seventh centuries there is good evidence that these three religious parties, the Vaishnava, Mahāyāna, and Hīnayāna, alternately shared spiritual and temporal power in the State—the two former having more influence in the north of India and the latter in the south. But at the same time a fourth group or party, representative of Brahman opinion, was gradually being formed within the Hīnayāna group, in sympathy with the ascetic ideals of the latter, but with more pronounced theological views and a more comprehensive philosophical programme. This party set up Siva as the ideal of Brahman asceticism in the place of Sākya Muni, the ideal of the Buddhist monastery, and taking the Upanishads for a starting-point elaborated a new rationalistic theory of the First Cause in opposition to the agnostic philosophy of

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the Buddha upon which both the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna systems were based.

This new Saiva school, the especial cult of Brahmanism as distinguished from Vaishnavism, which was the favourite cult of Kshatriyas, was not without royal patrons even before the seventh century, but until the appearance of its great exponent Sankarāchārya in the eighth or beginning of the ninth century it lacked a powerful interpreter to argue its philosophical tenets convincingly in the universities and public debating halls of the land, so that for a long time it remained an inconspicuous minority in the Great Assembly, and none of the Kings of Kings or Lords Paramount of Āryāvarta lent their powerful influence in propagating its doctrines as they did to the rival Vaishnava school. But it is quite possible, and indeed probable, that Saivism in some form had been the dominant cult in the asrams of Brahman ascetics during the whole period of Buddhist political ascendancy.

The break-up of political unity in Āryāvarta which so often followed the death of a strong ruler like Vikrāmāditya and Harsha no doubt had its effect in promoting the growth of independent parties in religious matters. In Indian history politics cannot be detached from religion. In Europe, and especially in England, the struggle to create a free political constitution was so severe that religious controversies took a subordinate place to the questions at issue between King and Parliament. But in India political freedom had been built upon the basis of the village republics from the earliest period of her history, and no Buddhist or Hindu king attempted to curtail the right to administer their own affairs which the village republics enjoyed under the Aryan system of constitutional government. There was no struggle for freedom of conscience or for the political rights of individuals because both were established by the unwritten law of the land, confirmed by every monarch in his coronation oath.

India's Magna Carta was contained in her constitutional law, a digest of the Acts of the Sabhā or tribal Parliament, which were as sacred as the Vedas or the sayings of the Buddha.

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Religion took the foremost place in the political history of India by a natural psychological process, because when the preliminary steps in social evolution were passed—freedom of conscience, and a sufficient measure of personal liberty to ensure the contentment and material prosperity of the community—all impediments to the attainment of the highest goal of intellectual effort—spiritual freedom—had been removed. Political liberty was held to be safe in the keeping of the king and his ministers: the Parliament of religions, whose functions were to lay down the law of the universal life, by observing which all men could live sanely and well, became invested with an authority which not even the king could dispute. But when every petty state had its own Great Assembly the Lords Spiritual who came to regulate the religious instruction of the people no longer spoke with the united voice of the 'Five Indies' because they were only representative of a few local sects. The more the political unity of India was broken up the more religious differences tended to become localised.

The architectural history of India shows how the rise of the new Saiva sect in the seventh century synchronised with the growth of the political power of the Dekhan and Southern India. But Fergusson's architectural nomenclature is wholly misleading, because he implies that 'Dravidian' temples, which, with few exceptions, follow Saiva symbolism in their structure, are non-Aryan: whereas all the architectural traditions of Southern India are as much Aryan as those of the North, and Sankarāchārya, the great apostle of the Saivas, took his stand upon the Vedas, the fountain-head of all Aryan religious teaching.

The structure and symbolism of Saiva temples, which are by no means entirely confined to Drāvida—the south of India—are good evidence that the new Saiva sect grew out of or was in close sympathy with the Hīnayāna school of Buddhism. As in all Indian temples, Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical, the yogi's cell as a symbol of the divine *Logos* formed the holy of holies, the shrine of the sacred image. In the north of India, where Vaishnavism and Mahāyāna Buddhism held

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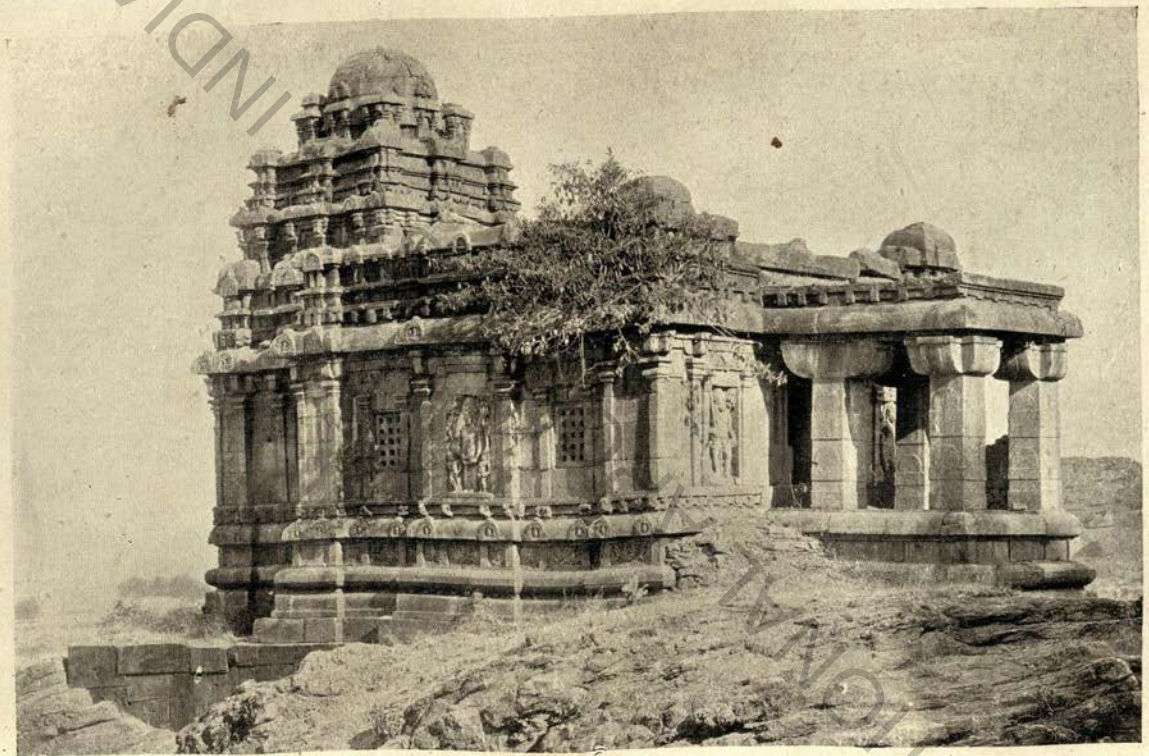

16. Siva Temple at Bādāmi

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the field, this is generally (in the temples which escaped the iconoclastic fury of Islam) surmounted by Vishnu's symbol, the royal sikhara. But in the South, which became the stronghold of Hīnayāna Buddhism after the break-up of the Mauryan Empire, the common symbol of Buddhist monasticism and Brahman ascetism, the domed stūpa, covered the sacred shrine instead of the sikhara. Fergusson's so-called 'Dravidian' temple is built up of a multiplication of these Saiva symbols, while his 'Indo-Aryan' temple is similarly constructed on the basis of the Vishnu sikhara. But both Saiva and Vaishnava symbols belong to Indo-Aryan religion and not to non-Aryan or Dravidian superstitions. How the original symbol of creation adopted by the Saivas, the four-head Brahmā image evolved from the stūpa, became vulgarised into Siva's phallic emblem, the lingam, is a technical point which has been discussed elsewhere.[1]

The tedious narrative of dynastic wars, both in the north and south of India, which fills up the interval between the death of Harsha and the great Muhammadan invasions throws little light upon the greater problems of Indian history, beyond the fact that these constant internal dissensions contributed largely to the success of the Muhammadan armies when, their progress westward having been stayed, the eyes of their warlords turned again towards India. The beautiful Saiva temples, probably of the seventh century, which remain near Bādāmi, the ancient capital of the Chalukyan kingdom, show that the new Saiva movement had made progress in Southern India long before Sankarāchārya came forward as the exponent of its philosophy. The famous sculptures of Māmallapuram, executed by the royal craftsmen of the Pallava dynasty about the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century, indicate that some of the kings of that line were patrons of the Saiva cult, the Vaishnava names now given to these sculptures by local tradition having been bestowed upon them in later times, probably by the followers of Rāmanūja.

The new Saiva propaganda in the beginning was of the nature

[1] See *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, by the author, pp. 106–108.

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of a general religious revival rather than a sectarian movement. The Brahmans of the South, penetrated by the spirituality of the Buddha's ethical doctrines, wished to set up a higher ideal of spiritual life than those of contemporary Buddhism and Jainism. The Saiva propagandists of the South were the Brahman reformers of Hīnayāna Buddhism, as the Vaishnava propagandists of the North had been in earlier times the Brahman reformers of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The earliest of these Saiva revivalists, Manikka-vacagar, a minister of one of the Pāndyan kings of Madura about the sixth century, preached renunciation as the cure for the ills of the flesh no less earnestly than Sākya Muni himself, and the burden of the hymns in praise of Siva attributed to him is always the same bhakti—perfect faith and devotion—which is the dominant note of the Mahāyāna doctrine. It was only through his philosophical contests with the Hīnayāna pandits of the South that he became known as 'the Hammer of the Buddhists'—the vital point at issue between them being the authority and spiritual significance of the Vedas. The successors of Manikka-vacagar in the seventh and eighth centuries were saints and poets rather than philosophers, their names being remembered by the miracles they are said to have performed and by devotional lyrics, like those of the early Buddhist bhikkus and bhikkanis, rather than by learned theses. The resemblance between the new movement and the early Buddhist propaganda is accentuated by the fact that though the Brahmans were the leaders of it and its chief philosophical exponents it was by no means Brahmanical in a caste sense, for the majority of its teachers were non-Brahmans. To this popular element in it must be attributed—as in other phases of Indian religion—the striking contrast between the lofty idealism of its esoteric teaching and the *naïveté* of its popular symbolism.

About the middle of the eighth century Vikrāmāditya II, the last but one of Pulakēsin's line, made his name more illustrious by the Virūpāksha temple of Pattadakal—a noble Saiva shrine built under his patronage—than by his successful wars with the Pāndya, Chola, and Kerala kings. Krishna-

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Rāja I of the Rāshtrakūta dynasty, which supplanted the Bādāmi kings as Lords Paramount of the Dekhan about 754, was one of the Brahman patrons of the Saiva movement. His reign was memorable for the commencement of the Kailāsa temple at Ellora, a rock-cut marvel representing Siva's Himālayan paradise which reproduced with more elaboration and on a grander scale the design of the Pattadakal temple.[1]

When, therefore, Sankarāchārya, a young Brahman sannyāsin of the Nambudri class, born according to one account in a village of the Malabar district, and according to another at Chidambaram, came forward about the beginning of the ninth century to challenge the pandits of Buddhism in the philosophical arena, he did not come to propound any original doctrines, or to found a new religious sect, but to maintain against all comers the original position of Brahman orthodoxy as laid down in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā. He was the delegate of the Brahman asrams of the South, sent to confute the doctrines of the Mahāyāna school which had been championed by Hiuen-Tsang on behalf of the learned Nālanda professors a century and a half before. Sankarāchārya left no personal memoirs and found no biographer to record the details of his mission with the exactitude of a Chinaman, but, shorn of its miraculous incidents, the legendary account of the young sannyāsin's victorious progress and of his reception at the royal courts reads like a chapter from the life of the Chinese pilgrim. After studying under a famous Brahman guru of Southern India, Govinda by name, and taking the vow of a sannyāsin, he first went to Benares, the university of Brahman orthodoxy, where probably his two most important works, the commentaries on the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā, were written. Having won great distinction in the debating hall, and received the customary highest award of the university, he set out in state, as Hiuen-Tsang had done before him, escorted by a great retinue of disciples, to champion orthodox Brahman philosophy on his university's behalf in all the public debating halls of India.

[1] For details see *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, by the author.

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His reception at the royal courts he visited was not less magnificent and deferential than that which Harsha had accorded to Hiuen-Tsang. Nor was his triumph in the public assemblies less complete than that which the learned Master of the Law had won in the royal pavilion at Kanauj. The pandits of Buddhism were no match for his great dialectical powers, and Sankarāchārya inflicted a final blow upon the prestige of both the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools by organising, with the help of many of his royal patrons, an order of sannyāsins open to all castes after the model of the Buddhist Sangha for the purpose of popularising Saiva teaching among the masses. The chief guru of the Śringeri Math, the most famous of the monasteries of Southern India founded by Sankarāchārya, is still regarded as the spiritual head of the Saiva cult.

Sankarāchārya's mission was so successful in Southern India that Buddhism, in its sectarian aspect, after the eighth century disappeared from the mainland and only maintained itself in Ceylon. The Vaishnavism of the Bhagavad Gītā, to which Sankarāchārya was in no way opposed, in a similar way supplanted, or rather absorbed, the Buddhism of the Mahāyāna schools in the North, which, however, continued to flourish in the Far East, both in China and Japan. The wholesale destruction of monasteries and temples by the Muhammadan invaders finally put an end to the organisation of the Buddhist Sangha officially set on foot by Asoka. The ethics of Buddhism had long before become the common property of all Hindus, and Sankarāchārya adopted its social principles by ignoring caste distinctions in the monastic order he founded; so that it was more in a material than a spiritual sense that Buddhism became extinct in India. When Sankarāchārya had accomplished his mission he retired to a Himālayan hermitage, and according to tradition died at Kedarnāth, one of the most venerated of the Saiva *tirths*, in 828, at the early age of thirty-eight.[1]

It is a matter of the highest historical importance to determine how much the ancient organisation of the village communities and the Aryan political constitution of India were

[1] See *Sri Sankarāchārya, his Life and Times*, by C. N. Krishnasami Aiyar.

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affected by frequent dynastic changes, and by the constant internal wars recorded from the death of Harsha until the Muhammadan conquest of Northern India. The increasing volume of epigraphical evidence collected by the Archaeological Survey of India tends to prove that, as in the time of Megasthenes, the Kshatriya traditions of chivalrous warfare protected the peaceful pursuits of the village communities throughout the troublous times of the Middle Ages, and that neither the quarrels of petty chieftains nor the rivalries of powerful dynasties affected seriously the solid organisation of village life which was the bed-rock of Hindu polity. A very interesting Pāndyan inscription of the ninth century records an agreement entered into by local chieftains with the headman of a village, or group of villages, by which the former solemnly promised, when they and their retainers were fighting, to avoid inflicting any injury upon villages or their property, and undertook to pay compensation of 100 *panams* for any cultivator who was injured, and 500 *panams* for any village that was destroyed.[1] There are also many medieval inscriptions which testify to the complete control exercised by village assemblies in local affairs, and the great respect paid to them by the supreme head of the State.

There is, moreover, a very important document, the *Nītisāra* of Sukrāchārya, which gives similar evidence with regard to Hindu political economy in the Middle Ages as the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra* does for the Mauryan period and the Code of Manu for the early centuries of the Christian era. All three of these works embody a common tradition which is of very much earlier date than their respective texts, but each of them reflects some special characteristics of contemporary conditions, and therefore may be taken as good historical evidence for the period to which the extant texts are usually assigned. Sukrāchārya describes his own treatise as an abridgment of earlier works by the Vedic rishi Vāsishtha and others, and refers to Manu as an authority on the subject. The references

[1] See *Report of the Assistant Archaeological Superintendent on the Progress of Epigraphy in Southern India*, 1914–15.

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to cannons and gunpowder give some indication of the period in which the author or compiler lived.

The *Sukrā-niti* is more explicit than the Code of Manu on the subject of caste. In ancient times, says Sukrāchārya, the castes were divided into four classes by Brahmā according to their occupations (iv, 3–21). "The man who is good by birth becomes low by low associations, but the man who is low by birth cannot become high by high associations" (iv, 27–28). Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sūdras, and Mlechchhas are separated, he declares, not by birth but by virtues and by works. "Neither through colour nor through ancestors can the spirit worthy of a Brahmana be generated." The Brahman is he who practises the duties of Brahmanhood; the Kshatriya he who is strong and valiant and self-restrained in his duty of protecting the State; the Vaisya he who lives by commerce, tends cattle, and cultivates lands; the Sūdra he who serves the twice-born, is bold yet peaceful and self-controlled, drives the plough, and carries wood and fodder for cattle; Mlechchhas are those who neglect their duties, are cruel and oppressive to others, excitable, envious, and foolish. In making official appointments work, character, and merit were to be regarded—neither caste nor family (ii, 111–112). Only in marriages and in eating together the observation of caste rules was compulsory. The reward of labour was also to be regulated according to caste distinctions. "The wealth that is stolen by the Brahman tends to well-being in the next life; the wealth that is given to the Sūdra tends only to hell," is one of Sukrāchārya's pungent aphorisms (ii, 811–812).

With regard to the organisation of town and village life the *Sukrā-niti* agrees with the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra*. The detailed planning of towns and villages is described. Wide roads (*rāja-margas*) were to be constructed to connect town and village. Bridges and ferries were to be provided for crossing rivers. The roads were to be made with a convex surface, like the back of a tortoise; they should have drains on both sides, and be repaired every year with stones or gravel by convict labour at the cost of the royal treasury. A travellers' rest-

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house was to be provided between every two villages; it was to be kept clean and in good order by the official in charge of it, who was also to scrutinise all travellers, record their names and permanent residence, take possession of their arms at night, and have the rest-house carefully guarded.

The king's troops were not to be quartered upon villagers, and his officers and servants were not to live in the villages nor meddle in their affairs. No soldier was to enter a village except with a royal permit, nor was he in any case to oppress villagers. In order to avoid any dispute with the military, villagers were advised to avoid dealings with soldiers. The king himself should personally inspect the villages every year, as well as the chief towns and districts, to ascertain whether his subjects were contented and not suffering from oppressive officials. "He should take the side not of his officers, but of his subjects" (i, 754). An officer accused by one hundred persons was to be dismissed. The village headman, as the king's deputy, should be like a father and mother to the people and protect them "from bandits, thieves, and officials" (ii, 343–344). "For who," says Sukrāchārya, "does not get intoxicated by drinking the vanity of office?" (ii, 227).

While the rights of the village communities were thus jealously safeguarded, the principle of self-government also extended to craft-guilds, banking and mercantile corporations, and religious organisations. The king's courts did not interfere in their domestic affairs: all disputes between members were settled according to custom and the traditions of each of these bodies, because such disputes involved technical questions upon which the king's officers could not properly adjudicate. The organisations of dancers and thieves came under this category.

In levying taxes upon the peasant cultivator the amount of his profits should be taken into consideration. Successful agriculture ought to yield a profit of double the expenditure, including the State taxes (IV, ii, 224–226). The king should levy taxes upon the peasant as a garland-maker gathers leaves

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and flowers from the trees in the forest, not like a charcoal-burner.

The extent of the liberty of the subject is carefully defined. The jurisdiction of the king's officers extended to the regulation of gambling, drinking, hunting; the use of arms; the sale and purchase of cattle, elephants, and other live-stock; immovable property; precious metals and jewellery; intoxicants and poisons; the manufacture of wines and spirits; the preparation of deeds relating to sales, gifts, and loans; and to medical practice. Liquor houses were not allowed inside villages, and no drinking of liquor was to be permitted anywhere in the daytime. In defining the limitations of monarchy the Hindu lawgiver is much more explicit and outspoken than the barons of England at Runnymede when they dictated Magna Carta. The king must never act upon his own opinions (ii, 5–6), but upon the opinions of the majority (i, 232–233). "Public opinion is more powerful than the king, as the rope made up of many fibres is strong enough to drag a lion" (iv, 7, 838–839). The king's word alone was not valid authority —"The king who commands without writing and the officer who acts without written orders are both thieves." The written order under the king's seal represented the real king. "The king is not a king" (ii, 582–587). And it must be remembered that Sukrāchārya's authority is not that of an obscure pamphleteer airing his personal opinions, or of a village Hampden risking his neck in defence of popular rights. Whoever the reputed author might have been he certainly was regarded as an exponent of an ancient popular tradition which every king was bound to respect, for these *Nitisāras* were the text-books for the king's education. There are always kings who forget their lessons or learn them badly; but the theory that India has never enjoyed a constitution according to modern ideas is an historical fiction which does not bear careful examination.

Sukrāchārya's instructions for the planning of the king's capital contain many interesting particulars. The site should be chosen in a place that was well wooded, fertile, with good

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supplies of water and food, and not too far from the hills. It must have good roads, wells and reservoirs, public parks or orchards, and well-constructed taverns, temples, and *serāis* for travellers. The royal fortress palace was a square block built in the centre of the city, with the Council buildings surrounding it. Accommodation was to be provided for the royal stables, storehouses, armoury and gymnasium, public and private entertainments, the king's study and sleeping apartments, the court house, royal workshops, servants' quarters, etc.

The Council House, consisting of three, five, or seven apartments, was to be a beautiful building accessible by all routes, painted and furnished with fountains and ventilating apparatus, clocks, mirrors, and musical instruments. The ministers and their staffs were to be provided with separate quarters adjoining it. Military cantonments were to be laid out on the north and east of the palace, and the dwelling-houses of the city were to be grouped round the latter in order of precedence as indicated in the plans of the Silpa-Sāstras previously described.

The functions of the Council of State and its constitution were practically the same as in the Mauryan period. The king was not always present at the deliberations of the Council, but when the resolutions of the Council had been put into writing they were signed first by the Foreign Minister, the Chief Justice, and the Pandit, next by the *Amātya* or Home Member, then by the *Sumantra* or Finance Member, and afterwards successively by the President (*Pradhāna*), the Legal Member (*Pratinidhi*, he who knows what can be done and what cannot be done), the Crown Prince, the *Purohita* or Royal Chaplain, and finally by the king.

Among the executive officers were the Director-General of Parks and Forests, who was to be an expert in horticulture and arboriculture and to be acquainted with the medicinal properties of products of the vegetable kingdom. The Chief Officer of Public Works was to be a master-builder, learned in the Silpa-Sāstras, who could construct palaces and their

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defensive works, wells, reservoirs, and irrigation machinery—" all very finely according to the rules of the Sāstras."

In the administration of justice strict regard was to be paid not only to the privileges of castes, villages, corporations, and families, but to local customs. For example, Sukrāchārya states that in Madhyadēsa beef-eating and polyandry were practised, and in the South Brahmans married their maternal uncles' daughters; but punishment was not to be inflicted in such cases because the custom of the country permitted these breaches of Aryan law. The ethical code of the *Sukrā-nitisāra* is tinged with opportunism and does not always maintain the high ideals of Buddhism. Sukrāchārya advises that the rules of chivalrous warfare should be observed as long as one is powerful, but when the enemy is strong there is no method so effective as the *kutayudha*, or warfare in which morality is disregarded. He counsels moderation in virtue as in vice. " Vices become virtues by change of circumstances. Virtue is that which is approved of by the majority: vice is that which is condemned by all. The theory of morals is very intricate and is not easily understood " (v, 70–72). Hunting was to be considered a vice by the ordinary man, but for the king it was permissible to hunt and kill wild beasts in order to develop his courage, activity, and military skill. When any members of the royal family were found to be of very evil disposition the king should not hesitate to get rid of them " by tigers, or by craft," lest the safety of the State and of the people should be imperilled. Indian history shows that when the king as well as his relations showed a " very evil disposition " similar drastic measures were not infrequently resorted to by the Council of State for putting an end to a royal dynasty.

When allowances are made for differences in matters of detail due to the maintenance of local customs, which Aryan polity always carefully respected, the principles of government laid down by these Indo-Aryan codes of law may be said to have equal application to the history of the Dekhan and Southern India as they have to that of the North. Aryan

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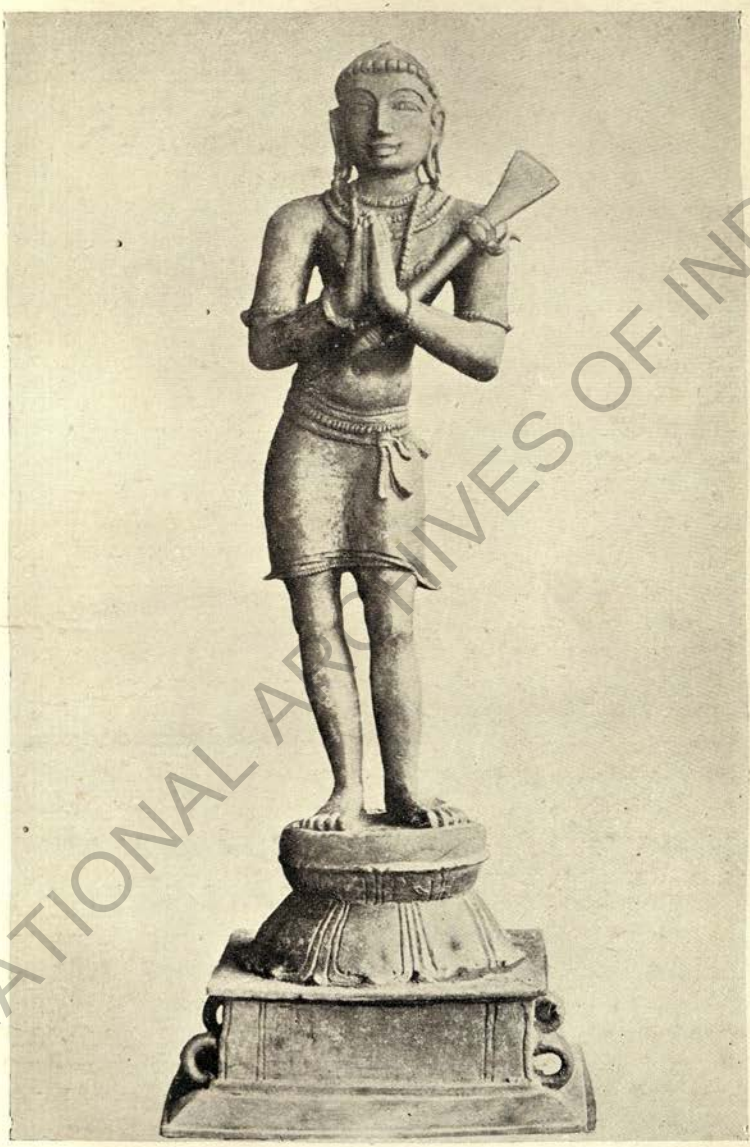

17. Bronze Statuette of Apparswami 226

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religion made all India one body in politics, for disputes on matters of doctrine or politics never caused a conflict between Church and State in India, and the principles of Aryan religion were always acknowledged to be the highest political laws. "All forms of sacraments are combined in politics; all the heavens are centred in the ethics of the State." [1]

The Dravidian races of the south of India clung with the tenacity of a convert to Aryan ideals of religion and polity, although they clothed them with their own vernacular forms of expression, and retained many of their own social habits and customs. When the Aryan tradition in the north of India began to lose some of its pristine spirituality, after the many incursions of foreign racial elements, it was the Brahmans of Southern India who restored the prestige of Vedic teaching and waged war against many immoral and corrupt practices of the Buddhist Sangha. And in the subsequent period, when the Muhammadan invaders in the North were hacking up the roots of Indo-Aryan culture and political organisation with the sword, the Aryan tradition continued to flourish under the patronage of the kings of the South. In the temple records of Southern India one still finds the most detailed statements of the Indo-Aryan system of local self-government as it is outlined in the codes of Kautilīya and Sukrāchārya.

From these records it is clear that Megasthenes was not exaggerating when he stated that the popular Assemblies of the South held the power of kings in check, though the 'Five Great Assemblies' to which he referred were different from those of the local Assemblies administering village affairs. The former constituted an imperial Parliament, the members of it taking precedence after the king's ministers. The five classes represented were, first, the village communities; secondly, the priests; thirdly, the physicians; fourthly, astrologers; and, fifthly, the king's executive officers. The representatives of the first class safeguarded the rights and privileges of the people; those of the second class controlled public religious ceremonies and the administration of temples;

[1] Mahābhārata, *Santi Parva*, LXIII, 29.

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the physicians directed State sanitation ; the astrologers fixed the auspicious times for public ceremonies and foretold coming events ; the king's officers supervised the collection and expenditure of the revenue and the administration of justice.[1]

So far as archaeological research has gone the period which yields the most interesting records relating to the constitution and powers of the village Assemblies is from the time of Sankarāchārya down to A.D. 1100, though there is no reason to doubt that such institutions existed in much earlier times and were part and parcel of the Aryanisation of the South. These inscriptions, mostly inscribed on the walls of the temple mandapams which formed the local council chambers and town halls, show that the same system of village unions under the control of a king's officer which existed in the days of Chandragupta Maurya was maintained in Southern India in medieval times.

But the point which the *Kautilīya-artha-Sāstra* does not bring out is the great extent of the powers exercised by the local Assemblies—the Sabhās and Mahā-sabhās—and the extreme respect paid to the 'great men' of the village by the officers of the king. Even when the king's intervention in the affairs of the village union is invoked, the edict of the Assembly which settles a dispute is not issued in the king's name, but in that of the 'great men,' to whom the royal envoy himself respectfully applies the honorific form of address, "their Majesties" (*Tiruvadiyar*).

These village Parliaments though responsible to the supreme Government for the payment of the taxes due from village lands had complete control over the collection of them, and the lands not reserved as royal domains or dedicated to religious purposes belonged ultimately to the Assembly, not to the State. The distribution of village lands among the cultivators was in their hands, both when fresh clearings were made and when holdings were taken over by the Assembly in default of payment of taxes. In disputed matters the king's authority, as arbitrator, was sometimes invoked, when the king in person,

[1] V. Kanakasabhai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, p. 143.

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or a royal envoy sent as his representative, would intervene. Thus in one inscription of the tenth century we get an intimate glimpse of the great Chola king, Sri Rājarājadēva, seated in the college hall on the south of the painted chamber next to the great Hippodrome Gate at Tanjore, adjudicating in a case in which certain landholders had not paid the taxes for three years. The judgment, drafted by the king's private secretary and approved by one of the ministers, the Chief Secretary, was to the effect that the lands might be sold by the village communities to the exclusion of the defaulting occupiers. But it is clear from the rule that the king's officers must live outside the village [1] that the royal officials did not ordinarily interfere with the administration of local affairs except when their counsel was thus invited, though occasionally they called for the village accounts and adjusted matters relating to temple endowments when complaints were made by the temple authorities. If a Sabhā, or Assembly, of a single village or of the smallest group of villages neglected its duties towards its constituency, the Mahā-sabhā, or the Great Assembly, of the next largest group could interfere and punish the offending members by fines. The king, also, could fine or otherwise punish the Sabhā for maladministration.

The Assemblies conducted their business by means of a number of committees in the same way as the affairs of Pātaliputra were conducted in the fourth century B.C. References are frequently made to a Water Committee, which attended to public wells, reservoirs, and irrigation works; a Garden or Park Committee, which looked after the public gardens where flowers were cultivated to be used as offerings to the gods and for garlands at public ceremonies, and also the public orchards which provided fruit for Brahmans in the temple service, for pilgrims, and for travellers. Another committee was concerned with the administration of those temples whose endowments and charities were not under the entire control of the Brahman custodians. The Assembly often provided endowments for temples or other religious institutions, free of all taxes, by

[1] Sukrāchārya, v, 179.

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selling village lands and, after making provision for payment of royal dues, devoting the proceeds to such purposes. Sometimes the Assembly not only transferred the whole revenues of villages, including the labour contributed by artisans in lieu of taxes, and similar contributions for public purposes, as a pious gift to a temple, but ordered that the temple authorities should take over judicial jurisdiction themselves and punish any offences committed against the law by the villages. They also received gifts of land or money for the purpose of constructing and maintaining works of public utility, such as wells and bathing tanks, or charitable institutions.

There were also committees charged with the administration of general affairs, finance, and justice. In judicial matters also these historical records supplement the statements of Kautilīya and Sukrāchārya, for they show that the popular Assemblies had similar powers to those of the royal courts of justice in cases which came under their jurisdiction. The Assembly not only imposed fines for breaches of communal laws, but even had jurisdiction in cases in which the penalty might be death. For the trial of such cases the Assembly was sometimes convened by the Governor of the district, but it also acted independently.

Among the most important of the inscriptions yet deciphered are two found on the walls of a temple in the Madura district laying down the rules for the election of members of the local Assembly. The circumstances recorded in the inscriptions show that an appeal had been made to the king by some of the inhabitants of the Brahman village union, Uttaramēru-Catūr-Vedimangalam, which consisted of twelve villages divided into thirty wards. The ground of complaint was the maladministration of the affairs of the union. The communal laws had been broken; the officials of the Assembly had embezzled public funds and had not rendered their accounts. The Chola king, Parāntaka I, who held court at Madura thereupon (A.D. 918) sent an official to confer with the local Assembly. The first inscription records an arrangement made "so that the wicked men of our village may perish and the

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rest prosper." The royal envoy, Tattanūr-Mūvendavēlāna, having been a Sūdra, it is not surprising that the Brahmans of the village union remained dissatisfied. The following year the King sent a Brahman of the court to act as arbitrator. The final settlement passed by "the great men sitting in the Assembly" and written out by the royal arbitrator at their command is recorded in the second inscription.

The purport of the settlement is the framing of rules for the election of the six committees of the Assembly and for the appointment of the local accountant. The committees were those for Annual Supervision; the Garden or Park Committee; the Tank or Water Committee; a Committee for the Supervision of Gold; a Committee of General Affairs (*Pancha-vāra*), and a Committee of Justice. The qualification for members related to property, age, and education. As regards property, the member nominated must own a quarter *vēli*[1] of tax-paying land, and also occupy and own a house together with the land upon which it was built. The age limit was fixed at above thirty-five and below seventy. This regulation doubtless took into account the fact that the constituency was a Brahman one, for a Brahman who followed the dharma of his caste strictly would not have completed the period of studentship much before thirty-five, and before seventy years of age he should have ceased to be a householder and have devoted himself to spiritual concerns.

The educational qualifications took into consideration the ancient Aryan tradition that an unlearned Brahman had no civil rights. The minimum standard fixed was knowledge of the *Mantra Brahmāna* and capacity to teach it. In the case of a Brahman who knew one Veda and one of the four *Bhashyas* the value of the property qualification was reduced: he was eligible if he possessed only one-eighth vēli of tax-paying land. These particular inscriptions give no indications whether women were eligible, but that this was the case at least in some village communities is evident from the mention in another South

[1] About 1¼ acres.

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Indian inscription of a woman serving on the Committee of Justice.

Among those qualified as above only those who were virtuous and well conversant with business, who had acquired their wealth by honest means, whose minds were pure, and who had not served on any of the committees for the last three years were to be nominated. The list of disqualifications included those who had formerly served on the committees but had not rendered their accounts. A safeguard against nepotism was provided by a rule excluding from office the near relatives of any member as specified in a long list of them. Next follows a list of crimes and misdemeanours which would make any member of the community ineligible—such as killing a Brahman, drinking intoxicating liquors, and adultery with the wife of a guru.

The names of the nominees for each of the thirty wards were to be inscribed on voting tickets by the electors, and the tickets for each ward were tied together in packets with the total number of votes marked outside. On the day of election, fixed by the 'Gold Committee' for the current year, a general meeting of the Assembly was held in the mandapam of the temple at which apparently all the 'pure classes,' young and old, could be present. All the temple priests were expected to attend in the *antarāla*, the ante-chamber in front of the shrine. The proceedings commenced by one of the senior priests, acting as 'arbitrator,' or returning officer, holding up in full view of the Assembly a jar containing the thirty packets of voting tickets. Then any young boy standing near—"one who was ignorant of the matter"—took at random one of the packets, and the tickets having been untied were placed in another jar and shaken together. From this jar the boy took one of the tickets and handed it over to the arbitrator, who received it "in the palm of his hand with the five fingers open" and read out the name written upon it. The ticket was then passed round so as to be seen and read by all the assembled priests. The person thus chosen was declared duly elected. One nominee for each ward was similarly chosen.

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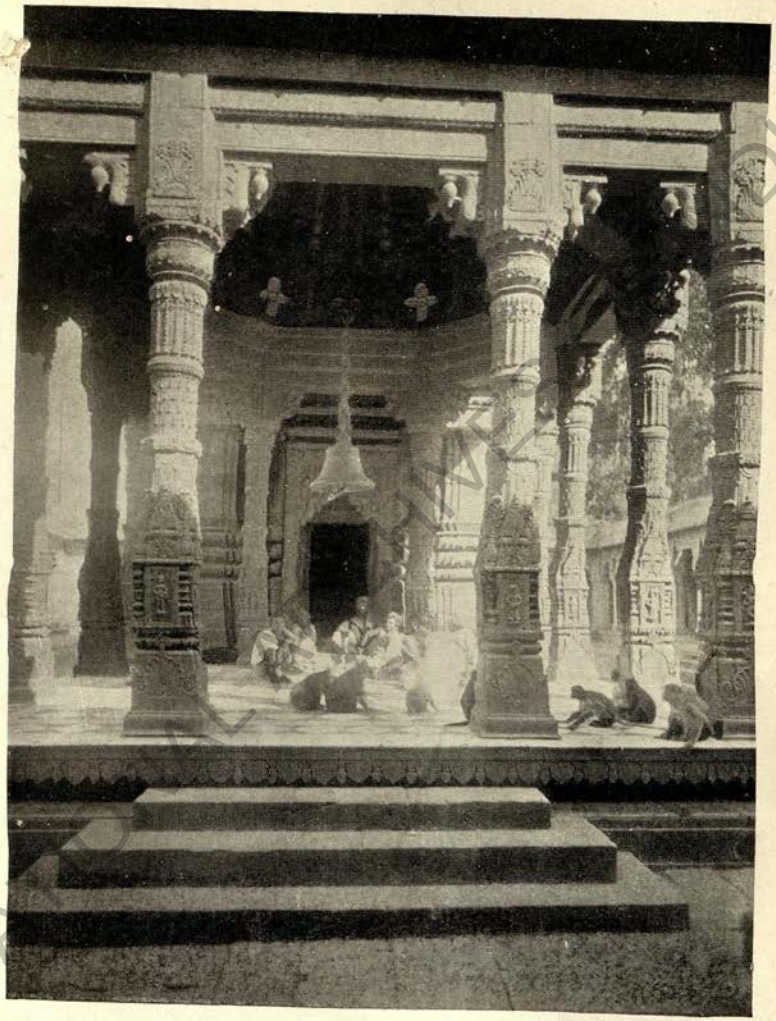

18. Interior of a Modern Temple Mandapam

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The edict of the Assembly goes on to declare that from the members thus duly elected twelve of the oldest and most learned, or those who had previously served on the Garden or Water Committees, were to constitute the Committee of Annual Supervision. Twelve of the rest should be taken for the Garden Committee, and the remaining six for the Water Committee. The term of office for each committee was one year, but any member guilty of misconduct was to be removed at once. The Committee of Justice for the current year were to summon a meeting of electors to fill up vacancies which might occur. Separate nominations were to be made for the Panchavāra Committee, whose functions were apparently those of general supervision,[1] and for the 'Gold Committee.' Thirty nominees were to be chosen in the manner described, and from these were to be eliminated the candidates of wards which had been represented on the same committees in the previous year. From the remainder six members were then selected for the first committee, and the same number for the second by an oral vote.

No regulations are made for the constitution of the Committee of Justice, nor is the method of its election described, so we must conclude that the ordinary rules, whatever they may have been, were followed in this case. It is reasonable to assume that in general principle the rules prescribed in the edict of the Assembly accorded with the ancient tradition of popular self-government of which the Brahmans of Uttaramallur were the custodians, only they were made more strict to meet the special circumstances of the case and to prevent a recurrence of the irregularities which had made the intervention of the King necessary.

The edict concludes with regulations for the office of village accountant—an important person in the political economy of the community. "Arbitrators, and those who have earned their wealth by honest means, shall write the accounts of the village." No accountant was to be reappointed to that office until he had himself prepared his accounts and submitted them

[1] Or perhaps revenue collection.

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for audit to the 'Great Committee,' which must certify to his honesty.

The method of organisation and the official administration of the districts and provinces of the Chola kingdom were likewise according to Indo-Aryan principles of political economy. The village community was the unit; a certain number of units combined to form a district (*nādu*); a federation of nādus formed a division (*kōttam*); and a federation of kōttams formed a province (*mandalam*).[1] Each of these different groups was in charge of a royal official, who with his assistants acted as the intermediary between the local Assemblies and the supreme Government, and exercised those functions which came within imperial jurisdiction. The Governor of a province was generally a prince of the royal house, as was the case in the administration of the Mauryan and succeeding empires of Northern India.

The principal source of Government revenue was the land-tax, the normal rate of which according to immemorial tradition was one-sixth of the gross produce. For the assessment of this tax a very careful survey of cultivated land was made, of which a register was kept, so that every cultivator knew the exact amount for which he was liable.[2] It was only in defiance of public opinion and of traditional laws that the king would venture to demand more from the cultivators directly. But in times of great emergency and with the consent of the popular Assemblies the rate could be raised. The king, moreover, with the consent of his Council, which was presumed to represent the people's interests, had the power of increasing his revenue by levying various imposts and tolls upon merchandise, especially luxuries, and a great number of these are detailed in the inscriptions. That the cumulative effect of these was sometimes oppressive may be gathered from the fact that one Chola king earned the popular title of Sunganda-virtā-Chola—'the Chola who abolished tolls.'[3]

[1] *Ancient India*, by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, pp. 173–174.

[2] A summary of Rājarāja's inscriptions relating to land surveys is given by Professor Krishnaswami Aiyangar in his *Ancient India*, pp. 175–176.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

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No form of government, Eastern or Western, democratic, autocratic, or bureaucratic, has yet been devised which cannot be and is not made an instrument of oppression, but the common belief of Europe that Indian monarchy was always an irresponsible and arbitrary despotism is, so far as concerns the pre-Muhammadan period, only one of the many false conceptions of Indian history held by Europeans. Neither ancient nor modern history in Europe can show a system of local self-government more scientifically planned, nor one which provided more effective safeguards against abuses, than that which was worked out by Aryan philosophers as the social and political basis of Indo-Aryan religion. The liberty of the Englishman was wrung from unwilling rulers by bitter struggles and by civil war. India's Aryan constitution was a free gift of the intellectuals to the people; it was designed, not in the interest of one class, but to secure for all classes as full a measure of liberty and of spiritual and material possessions as their respective capacities and consideration for the common weal permitted.

Much has been written of Brahmanical tyranny. Authority makes tyrants of all men. But intellectual tyranny is certainly the mildest form of that disease and the least injurious to humanity. The Brahmans were profound students of human nature, and they recognised intuitively a psychical fact which Europe is learning empirically by a slow and painful process, that all men are not born equal, and that terrible disasters to civilisation may occur by giving free access to the well of knowledge for all men, whether they are spiritually fit for it or not. If the restrictions imposed by Brahmans seem too severe to Western minds, they may be taken as a proof of the deep religious spirit in which the Indian people entered into the acquisition of knowledge; and certainly no people ever honoured learning more or were more ardent in the pursuit of it. Nor was the Brahman dispensation less liberal in bestowing its intellectual treasures upon the people than the spiritual hierarchy of Europe: the 'illiterate' masses of India might even now give lessons in culture to the scientific barbarians of modern Europe.

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The dynastic history of Southern India, so far as it is known, does not give much insight into the personal character or achievements of the Chola kings, nor do the frequent wars in which they were engaged with their rivals, the Pāndyas, Pallavas, Cheras or Keralas, and Chalukyas, have the political interest which belongs to those of the great imperial rulers of the North. The Cholas were of an ancient lineage, as it is mentioned in the Mahābhārata, and their kingdom was renowned in the early centuries of the Christian era for its maritime trade, centred in a great port called Kāviripaddinam, at the mouth of the Kaviri river, where there were settlements of Yavana merchants (Asiatic Greeks) and many other foreign traders,[1] for the markets of Kāviripaddinam, besides local products and manufactures such as fine cotton goods, received great quantities of merchandise from the Ganges valley, from Burma, Ceylon, and from the ports of the Red Sea. In the warlike expeditions of the South Indian kings their navies often played a considerable part, and no doubt the legend of Rāvana's 'magic car' on which he transported the captive Sītā to Ceylon is the poetical version of some piratical raid up the Godāvari river in which the fair Aryan princess was seized as a rich prize and carried off to Lankā, the pirate king's stronghold. It is easy to understand that such an outrage created as much uproar in the Aryan court of Ajodhyā as the abduction of Helen did in the palace of Menelaus.

The wars with Ceylon occupy a prominent place in Tamil history. The first definite record of a Chola king's exploits by the court poets of Southern India refers to a successful naval expedition from Kāviripaddinam against Ceylon, in which Karikāla obtained 3000 craftsmen to assist in a great work he was undertaking—the embankment of the Kaviri. By this means, it is said, he was enabled to continue it for a hundred miles. Probably the need of craftsmen for executing great public works of this kind was often one of the motives for plundering expeditions. Indo-Aryan masons were noted for their skill, and even Mahmūd of Ghazni and Timūr in their

[1] See *History of Indian Shipping*, by Radhakumud Mookerji, p. 136.

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insatiate thirst for blood observed the rule that the lives of craftsmen should be spared in battle so that they might contribute by their labour to the glory of the victors. Indian craftsmen, especially the master-builders learned in the Silpa-Sāstras, have thus played a very important part in the diffusion of Aryan culture.

Buddhism in Southern India, as in the North, favoured the growth of a vernacular literature, and it is to the early centuries of the Christian era, when Buddhism and Jainism were flourishing in the South, that scholars generally assign the classical works of Tamil literature, of which the *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar is a typical masterpiece. At this period Madura, under the patronage of the Pāndya kings, took the corresponding place to Taksha-silā or Pātaliputra in the North. We have had acquaintance already with the practice in Northern India of referring philosophical theses to the General Assembly of pandits for judgment. A remarkable institution connected with the Pāndyan capital was the Sangam, a body of critics and poets which constituted a court for judging the merit of poems or plays submitted to it.[1] It apparently existed for a considerable period, as forty-nine Pāndyan kings are said to have been its patrons.

But though the royal courts were thus the centres of literary culture and great mercantile activity, and though the Dravidian capitals vied in splendour with those of Āryāvarta, there is little evidence that civilisation had penetrated deeply among the people of Southern India, as it had done in the North, before the beginning of the great Saiva movement. Hiuen-Tsang has not much to say in praise of Dravidian civilisation until he comes to Kānchipūra (Conjeveram), then the Pallava capital, where he says the people " were courageous, thoroughly trustworthy and public-spirited, and they esteemed great learning." In other parts of the southern districts he describes the inhabitants as " harsh and impetuous, of mixed religions, indifferent to culture and only good at trade." [2] His observa-

[1] *Ancient India*, by Krishnaswami Aiyangar, chap. xiv.
[2] Beal, *On Yuan Chwang*, vol. ii, pp. 226–228.

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tions carry the more weight because he frequently testifies to the love of learning he found among those who were not followers of the Law during his Northern pilgrimage.

The architectural record of the South also goes to prove that Dravidian civilisation derived its main impulse from the gradual extension southward of Indo-Aryan culture, for the so-called 'Dravidian style' of architecture is only Indo-Aryan design adapted to the symbolism of the Saiva cult and shows little direct inspiration of Dravidian ideas. The earliest Aryanisation of the South gathered strength under the disasters which overtook Aryan civilisation in the North, for they drove Indo-Aryan royal craftsmen to take refuge in the courts of the Southern kings and brought many other refugees to complete the Aryan colonisation of Drāvida. The records of the admirable system of local self-government, based upon Indo-Aryan traditions, which have been mentioned above synchronise with the Chola hegemony of Southern India established about the middle of the ninth century by Vijayālaya, though no doubt a similar system, more or less developed, had existed in the kingdoms of the Pāndya, Pallava, and other dynasties before that time.

Vijayālaya, profiting by the exhaustion of the Pāndya and Pallava powers resulting from their constant wars with the Chalukyas and with each other, made the city of Tanjore his capital and extended the Chola dominion down to Cape Comorin. His two immediate successors inflicted further defeats upon the Pallavas and pushed northward to the territories of the Rāshtrākūtas—the dynasty which in the middle of the eighth century had succeeded the Chalukyan kings as lords of the Dekhan—and Parāntaka I, who reigned from 907 to 947, drove the Pāndyas from their ancient capital, Madura. He was holding court there in 918 when the Brahmans of Uttaramallur appealed for his intervention in the affairs of their commune. Parāntaka, like his predecessors, was a patron of the Saiva cult, and signalised his victories by re-plating with gold the great hall, or *Kanaka Sabhā*, of the shrine of Chidambaram, one of the five great Saiva temples of

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Southern India dedicated to the five lingams, or five cosmic elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether.[1] Chidambaram is consecrated to the last of the five, *ākāsa*, the cosmic ether, which is appropriately symbolised in the Holy of Holies by an empty shrine shrouded in utter darkness. As is usual in Southern India, Siva is here imaged as Nātarāja, the Lord of the Dance, a symbol of the rhythmic vibration of ether by which Ishvara sets the universe in motion and impels it to destruction according to his will. The beautiful *Nritya Sabhā*, the dancing hall of the temple, is devoted to the professional nautch, an institution intended to popularise the esoteric philosophy of Saivism, though it cannot be said to be inspired by its highest ideal of living.

Parāntaka's eldest son, Rājaditya, when he succeeded his father rashly ventured to measure his strength with the Rāshtrakūta forces, but was killed at Takkōlam in a hand-to-hand fight with Krishna III, brother-in-law of Būtūga II, the rāja of the territories comprised in the present Mysore state. This catastrophe was followed by Krishna's entry into Kānchi and the siege of Tanjore, and though the second of Parāntaka's sons did something to avert further disaster it was thirty-six years before the military genius of Rājarāja I restored the fortunes of the Chola dynasty.

This doughty warrior, who succeeded Parāntaka II in 985, was a contemporary of Sabuktagīn, the founder of the Ghaznevide dynasty, and of Mahmūd : the contest for the supremacy of the Dekhan and Southern India was fought while Northern India was being ravaged by the Muhammadan raiders. Rājarāja's first success was a naval action off the Malabar coast in which the Chera fleet was destroyed. Then he forced to acknowledge his suzerainty the districts contained in the present Mysore state belonging to the Chalukyan rāj. The Telugu and Uriya countries right up to the Mahānadi river,

[1] The other four temples are those at Kānchi (Conjeveram), which is dedicated to the earth-lingam ; the Jambukeshvaram temple near Trichinopoly, where a perennial spring is worshipped as the water-lingam ; Tiruvannāmalai, in South Arkot, to the fire-lingam ; and Kālāhasti, North Arkot, to the air-lingam.

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which formed the kingdom of Kalinga, were the next additions to the Chola Empire. A struggle of four years ended about 1005 in the complete conquest of Ceylon, which remained subject to the Chola power for seventy years afterwards. Rājarāja's fleets seem to have swept the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, for the records of his triumphs claim dominion over "the twelve thousand ancient islands of the sea." He is also said to have emulated Mahmūd's exploits by invading the northern part of the Chalukyan territories with a vast army which chastised the hereditary enemies of the Cholas by indiscriminate plunder and slaughter. His victories were commemorated by the building of the great Saiva temple at Tanjore, one of the most splendid monuments of South Indian architecture. Like all other Dravidian temples it follows entirely Indo-Aryan building traditions.

Rājarāja's son, Rajendra (1013–1044), added to his father's conquests both by sea and land. His greatest exploit was the conquest of the southern districts of Burma, forming the ancient kingdom of Prome, or Pegu. The inscriptions of the thirteenth year of his reign record that the Chola fleet convoying his army, including war-elephants, across the Bay of Bengal met and scattered the enemy's fleet and then assisted in the capture of the capital Kadāram and the seaports of Takkōlam and Matama, or Martaban—a much greater naval achievement than the transport of William of Normandy's troops across the English Channel, which took place about forty years afterwards. Rajendra's armies, besides overcoming the resistance of several Sinhalese kings and defeating their ancient enemies, the Chalukyas—who were at this time represented by a new dynasty known as the Chalukyas of Kalyān—penetrated to the Ganges valley, probably with the assistance of the fleet, and forced Mahipāla, King of Gaur, one of the representatives of a dynasty which had ruled in Bengal since the middle of the eighth century, to acknowledge Chola supremacy. The Chola Empire was thus one of the greatest known since the days of the Guptas, extending as it did over the greater part of Eastern India and the Dekhan, and the whole

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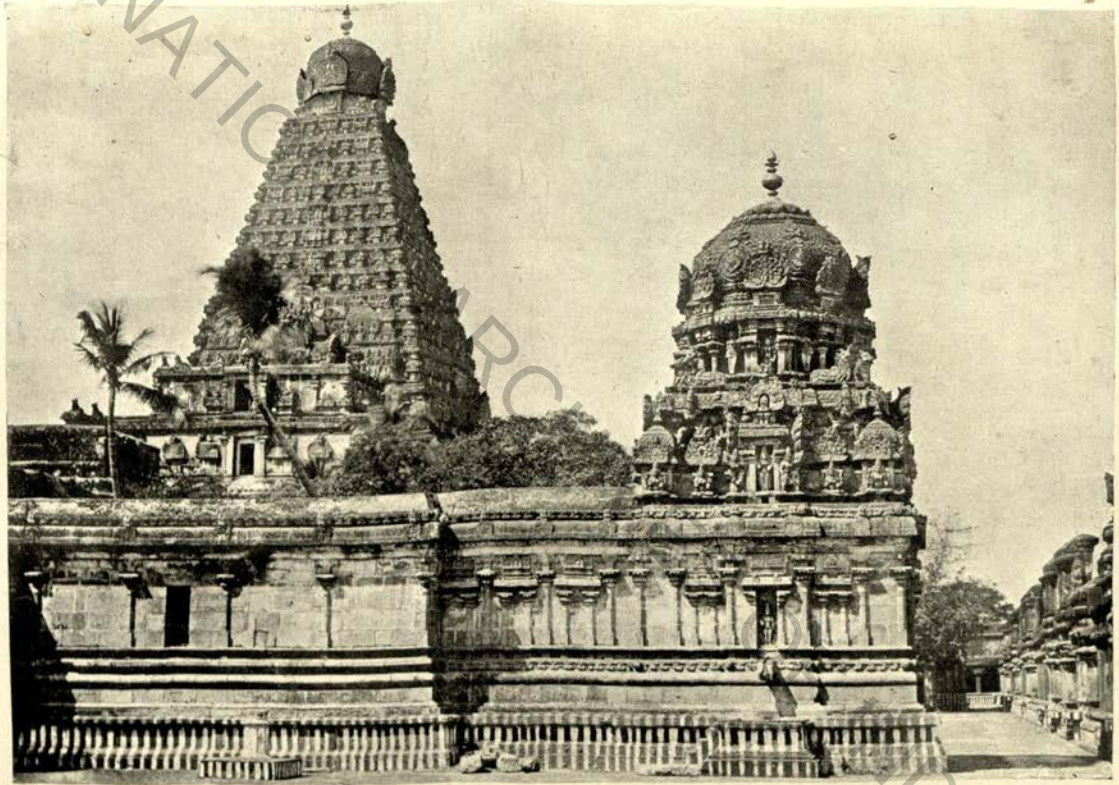

19. The Great Temple, Tanjore

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of Southern India, including Ceylon. Had the Cholas succeeded in establishing a complete hegemony over India south of the Vindhyas they might have created an effective barrier to the advance of the Musalman armies southward; but the cruelty and disregard of the rights of non-combatants which seem to have characterised the Chola wars did not contribute to the internal strength of the empire, and the death of Rajendra I was followed by a revolt of some of the tributary states. This gave Somēsvara I, the Chalukyan king, an opportunity to push forward to the Tungabhadra river, and in the great battle of Koppam in A.D. 1053 Rājadhirāja, the then reigning Chola emperor, was slain. The day was saved by the valour of the Crown Prince, Rajendra, who turned defeat into victory and was crowned emperor on the battlefield, but the Tungabhadra remained the frontier between the two powers, and neither Rajendra III nor his successors attained the full height of Chola ambition by establishing a Tamil empire extending over all Drāvida, or India south of the Vindhyas.

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CHAPTER XV

THE ARTISTIC RECORD OF SOUTHERN INDIA FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURIES

THE artistic record of Southern India from the seventh to the tenth or eleventh centuries, which cover the great Chola period, is fortunately more complete than that of the Guptas; partly because the iconoclastic rage of Islam had satiated itself before the resistance of Hinduism in the South was broken down, and partly because Islam itself by that time had learnt to regard India as its adopted homeland. It had taken the ensign of Hindustan, the crescent moon, as its own, and had imbibed some of the ideas and the tolerant spirit of Hindu philosophy.

The early architectural monuments of the Saiva revival, of which the temples at Bādāmi are typical, are all impressed with the great intellectuality and refinement which distinguished Brahman culture before popular Hinduism obscured the clarity of its thought with its own fantastic and turgid imagery. These seventh-century temples, rivalling the more famous temples of Greece in their noble design and superb craftsmanship, mark the time when Bādāmi was the capital of the Chalukyan kings; for they, like the Cholas, were patrons of Saivism. The last but one of their line, Vikrāmāditya II (*circa* 733–747), built the splendid temple of Virūpāksha at Pattadakal, which must have been one of the great centres of Brahmanical learning in the South. In the eighth century every South Indian dynasty which played any considerable part in the history of the times supported the Saiva movement. The Pallavas at Conjeveram, before the Cholas made it their

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capital, built the Kailāsanātha temple. At Māmallapuram, in the same century, their royal craftsmen sculptured some of the famous *Raths*. The period of the Chola Empire beginning in the middle of the tenth century with Parāntaka I is celebrated by the oldest part of the Chidambaram temple; but the most magnificent of the Chola monuments, the great temple at Tanjore and the ruined temple and irrigation works at Gangai-konda-Cholapuram, commemorate the triumphs of Rājarāja and his son, Rajendra I, at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries. Gangaikonda-Cholapuram was the new capital built by Rajendra after his great career of conquest was achieved; the name having reference to his defeat of the King of Gaur, who, it is said, brought Ganges water by way of tribute to consecrate the mighty reservoir constructed to irrigate the two adjoining districts. The embankment of it was a wonderful piece of masonry sixteen miles long, provided with the necessary sluices and channels for irrigation purposes. It was these magnificent public works of the Indo-Aryan tradition of kingship which in the eleventh century excited the wonder of Arabian travellers like Alberuni, who was not otherwise given to admiring things Indian. Alberuni's words are: "Our people, when they see them, wonder at them, and are unable to describe them, much less to construct anything like them."[1] He might have added that it was hardly a principle of Muslim government outside of India to concern itself with beneficent public works of this kind, unless they contributed to the comfort and pleasure of their divinely appointed kings or to the enjoyment of the faithful—and even then it was the labour and wealth of the 'infidels' which provided them.

The temple architecture of Southern India is especially interesting because in its present form it preserves more completely than that of most other parts of India the fundamental idea of Indo-Aryan temple-planning. The temple and its enclosures were the abode of the Devas, and of the sons of the Devas—their devotees—and the model which this spiritual

[1] *Alberuni's India*, E. C. Sachau's translation, vol. ii, p. 144.

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Sangha took for its town-planning was that of the Aryan village which sheltered the lay Sangha of the Indo-Aryan community. Its four gates at the four cardinal points were the 'gopurams,' the 'cattle-forts' of the Aryan village fortress; only there was a spiritual interpretation of the word, for the 'cows' which gave sustenance to this spiritual community were the four Vedas. The corridors at Rameśvaram which lead up from the gopurams to the holy shrine—the king's palace at the four cross-ways—are the Rājapatha and Vamana-patha of the Aryan town-plan; those which form its Pradakshinā path represent the Maṅgalavīthi.[1] The mandapam of the shrine is the Council House; the Halls of a Thousand Columns reproduce in the symbolism of sculptured stone the sacred groves and public orchards dedicated for the sustenance of sādhu and sannyāsin. The bathing-tanks likewise represent those essentials of Aryan social life which the village republics so carefully ordered and maintained. The temple bazars along the outer walls occupy the sites appointed for them in the Indo-Aryan town-plan. All these different features of civic life were reproduced in temple-planning, though variations in detail are found in every temple, as very few were completely laid out from the beginning. Especially as regards their enclosures they represent the growth of many centuries. But the symbolism of Indian temple-building is always Indo-Aryan in the South as well as in the North, based upon the ideals given to India by her Aryan teachers. The temple was not only the college and Parliament-house of the Indo-Aryan community, in the last resort it was their citadel-fortress; and this circumstance may have contributed largely to the wholesale destruction of temples and the massacre of monks and priests by the Muhammadans in Northern India.

While the Buddhists have left very few traces of their architecture in Southern India, except the traditions which are embodied in the design of Saiva temples and monasteries, their rivals the Jains, who enjoyed a not inconsiderable share of royal patronage even in the time of the Saiva revival, have

[1] *Supra*, pp. 23–24.

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20. Bronze Statuette of Nātarāja

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preserved some fine memorials of their early history. At Ellora, the Indra Sabhā and the Jagannātha Sabhā are nearly contemporary with the great temple of Kailāsa, and must have been excavated under the patronage of the Chalukyan kings, either those of the Bādāmi or Rāshtrakūta branch. In the Pāndyan territory there is the exquisite monolithic temple of Kalugamalai, which is said to have been originally Jain. But the most famous Jain temples of Western India are of later date. Jain temple architecture, like the Buddhist and Brahmanical, has two distinct architectonic symbols, the stūpa dome and the sikhara, according to the philosophic ideals to which the shrine was originally dedicated. The ascetic ideal was symbolised by the stūpa dome, which crowned the tower of the shrine; the layman's ideals—the *bhakti-* and *karma-marga*—were represented by the sikhara. A later development, also common to all sects, based upon a philosophical compromise—the *via media*—was symbolised by a combination of the two structural types. In this case the sikhara is crowned by a stūpa dome instead of by Vishnu's special symbol, the amalaka, or fruit of the blue lotus flower. This composite form was taken by Fergusson as the leading characteristic of his 'Chalukyan style,' because it is mostly found in the Chalukyan territory; but this classification, like the 'Dravidian style,' is a purely arbitrary one which diverts attention from the vital principles of Indian architectural design, and should be abandoned by those who wish to penetrate into its psychology.

The bronze sculpture of the great Chola period forms one of the most important chapters of Indian art, and from an historical point of view is invaluable for its unique impressions of the ideals of the Saiva cult. The images and idealised portraits of the Saiva revivalists preserved in the Madras and Colombo Museums and in the temples of the five lingams in Southern India reveal to us the passionate fervour of these South Indian *bhaktas*: Apparswami with his hands joined in prayer as he goes on his lifelong pilgrimage from shrine to shrine to weed the temple courtyards;[1] Sundaramurti, the

[1] See *Ideals of Indian Art*, by the author, p. 114, Pl. XIV.

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youthful bridegroom, transfigured by the divine illumination which claimed him as a servant of the Lord Siva ; Sambandha, the inspired child, singing hymns in Siva's praise.

In the bronze images of Siva as Nātarāja the Chola royal craftsmen interpreted with consummate art the esoteric ideals of Saivism, following the noble traditions of Elephanta and Ellora, but giving full play to their own Dravidian fantasy and unrivalled skill as metal-workers. The Nātarāja of Rājarāja's great temple at Tanjore [1] and two others from the Tanjore district in the Madras Museum are the masterpieces of the Chola period. In this great personification of the cosmic rhythm, Siva, surrounded by a halo of fire in the form of the setting sun, is dancing on the dwarf demon Tripura—the world, the flesh, and the devil—holding the sacrificial fire and beating the cosmic time with an hour-glass drum. The beautiful Sanskrit slokas which the Brahman priest recites in the service of the temple is the devotional interpretation of the symbolism :

" O Lord of the Dance Who calls by beat of drum all who are absorbed in worldly things, and dispels the fear of the humble and comforts them with His Love divine : Who points with His hand to His uplifted Lotus-foot as the refuge of salvation : Who carries the fire of sacrifice and dances in the Hall of the Universe : do Thou protect us ! "

[1] First published by Mr O. C. Gangoly in his valuable monograph on South Indian bronzes (Indian Society of Oriental Art, 1915).

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CHAPTER XVI

ISLAM'S FIRST FOOTING IN INDIA—NORTHERN INDIA FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURIES

WE must now turn back to the history of India north of the Vindhyas, which has been brought down to the end of Harsha's reign. Harsha's death, about the beginning of A.D. 648, brought his dynasty to an end and broke up the empire he had created. Incidentally it led to the interference of China in the political affairs of Northern India. Since the days of Kanishka the spread of Buddhism in China had been gradually bringing the Far East into closer touch with India, chiefly by way of sea, which was the shorter and probably the safer route and the principal way of trade. In A.D. 526 Southern China became of more importance in the hierarchy of Buddhism than India itself, owing to Bodhidharma, who was the spiritual head of the Sangha at the time, and the twenty-eighth successor of the Buddha, transferring his seat to Canton. Whether this was one of the consequences of the Hun invasions or of the waning influence of Buddhism in the royal courts of India is not known; but Bodhidharma was received with high honour at the court of Nanking, and China henceforth remained the seat of the Buddhist patriarchate, a circumstance which led to the migration of numbers of Indian Buddhists, both monks and laymen, to the Far East.

In the seventh century the Chinese empire which united Northern and Southern China had reached the summit of its power under the Tang dynasty, and though Hiuen-Tsang had undertaken no diplomatic mission, Harsha's attachment to him as a masterly exponent of Buddhist doctrine made the

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Indian Emperor wish to enter into friendly intercourse with the former's powerful patron at the Chinese court. In 641 Harsha sent a complimentary mission headed by a Brahman to the Tang Emperor Tai-Tsung, which returned shortly before Hiuen-Tsang left India accompanied by Chinese envoys bearing a friendly acknowledgment from their imperial master. The Chinese Emperor in 646 followed up this exchange of courtesies by sending another mission, probably to announce the safe return of Hiuen-Tsang with his precious collection of Buddhist treasures; but before this reached India Harsha had died.

Apparently the extravagant favours shown to the Buddhist Sangha by Harsha and his family had made him enemies in the imperial Council, for one of the ministers, Arjūna or Arunāsa, succeeded in setting aside the claims of Harsha's family and in putting himself upon the throne. A student of Indo-Aryan history may venture to doubt whether the term 'usurper' which Mr Vincent Smith and other writers have used in describing this event can be justly applied to Arunāsa. Indo-Aryan law did not vest the right of succession to the throne in the family of the reigning monarch absolutely: it was contingent on the approval of the State Council as representing—*de jure* if not *de facto*—the whole Aryan community. It was no doubt the case that the power wielded by the Council in this respect was often only nominal, for the king had the right to choose and dismiss his own ministers, and in his own lifetime could ensure that they were subservient to his will. But we have already noticed several instances in which the Council, at the king's death, exercised their traditional prerogative, enabling them in the interest of the State to alter the line of succession to the throne; and though Buddhist writers would naturally regard Arunāsa as a 'usurper,' it is more than probable that he was the lawful successor of Harsha as the nominee of Harsha's ministers.

The incident of the firing of the pavilion at Kanauj, if it were not an accident, shows that even in Harsha's lifetime there had been some who had dared to protest against the

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Emperor's pronounced partiality for Buddhism. Kumāra, Harsha's most powerful vassal, did not share his suzerain's religious sympathies. In the seventh century Buddhism, at the height of its ascendancy in China, had lost to a great extent its influence as a popular religion in India, both in the North and in the South. It was therefore to be expected that orthodox Brahmanism would seize the opportunity of Harsha's death to reassert its political supremacy in Āryāvarta. Of the disorders which followed the deposition of Harsha's family no detailed account is given. It may well be believed that they and their partisans were not disposed of by the mere fiat of the imperial Council, and the unrest which supervened was aggravated by a drought which caused a severe famine. But Arunāsa, who had control of the imperial army, or the principal part of it, might have overcome these difficulties if he had not made the fatal blunder of allowing the Chinese envoys, who reached Magadha soon after his accession, to be insulted and maltreated. Their escort was massacred, but Wang-hiuen-tse, the leader of the mission, together with his deputy, succeeded in escaping to Nepal, which was then a dependency of the kingdom of Tibet.

There they found not only friendly shelter but an army to avenge the outrages inflicted on them. The King of Tibet, Srong-Tsan-Gampo, was not only as ardent a Buddhist as Harsha himself, but a devoted ally of the Chinese Emperor, whose daughter, the Princess Wencheng, he had married. He promptly sent Wang-hiuen-tse a thousand Tibetan cavalry to join the army of seven thousand men which the Rāja of Nepal had placed at his disposal. With their aid Wang-hiuen-tse soon overran Magadha and exacted terrible vengeance for the insults inflicted on him. The chief town of the northern province was captured after a short but bloody siege, and three thousand of the garrison were beheaded as a punishment. In subsequent battles Arunāsa's armies were completely broken, and he himself together with his entire family became Wang-hiuen-tse's captives. Kumāra, Harsha's ally, found it politic to assist the Chinese general by sending him military equipment

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and large supplies of cattle; and no doubt he profited by the collapse of Harsha's empire to assert his independence in Assam and Eastern Bengal. Wang-hiuen-tse, when his victorious campaign was ended, returned to China to report the tragic results of his mission to the Emperor, taking the miserable Arunāsa with him. In 657 he visited India once more, but this time as a peaceful Buddhist pilgrim to worship at the shrines of the Blessed One, following the usual route of Chinese pilgrims at that time, which was to enter India through Nepal and return through Northern India by the passes of the Hindu Kush.

The effect of the break-up of Harsha's empire in shifting the dynamic centre of Indo-Aryan culture from Magadha to Drāvida, or India south of the Vindhyas, has already been described. The further consequence of the political disintegration of Āryāvarta was more disastrous, for it gave the Arabs the opportunity they were seeking of setting a firm foot in India. About (710) one of the armies of the Khalif Walid, under the command of a young Arab chieftain named Muhammad ibn Kāsim, then only seventeen years old, invaded Sind, and after defeating and killing the Brahman king Dāhir, conquered the whole of the Indus valley from the delta of the river up to Multān.

The first Muhammadan conquerors of India, though inspired by a fanatical hatred of the idolator, inherited some of the chivalrous characteristics of the Arab race, for the Arabs formed the civilising leaven in the uncultured world of Islam. The early Arab historians were generous in praise of the people of India. Thus Al Idrisi, who compiled a book of travel at the end of the eleventh century, wrote that "Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty, and fidelity to their engagements are well known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side." [1] Muhammad Kāsim was relentless in severity towards the Kshatriya warriors who opposed him, but when his victory was complete

[1] Elliot's *History of India*, vol. i, p. 88.

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he found it expedient to employ the Brahmans in pacifying the country by taking them into his confidence. He allowed them to repair their temples and to follow their own religion as before, placed the collection of revenue in their hands, and employed them in continuing the traditional system of local administration.[1]

The principles of Muhammadan rule, however, always showed a sharp contrast to those of the Aryan lawgivers. The infidels whose lives were spared were allowed to exist so that they might contribute by their industry and skill to the sustenance and comfort of the faithful. Sind contributed a large annual tribute to the treasury of the Khalif at Baghdad, raised by special taxes imposed upon non-Musulmans. A strong economic pressure was brought to bear upon the Hindu population to persuade them to embrace Islam, for those who did so were *ipso facto* relieved from payment of the capitation tax and other special imposts, and acquired all the rights of a Musalman citizen in the law-courts, where the Qurān and not Aryan law and custom decided disputes in all cases. This method of proselytising was very effective among the lower castes of Hindus, especially among those who suffered from the severity of Brahmanical law with regard to the 'impure' classes.

Though the Arabs were disposed to admire Indians for their strict regard for justice, they had little feeling for it themselves in their dealings with the 'infidels.' Muhammad Kāsim had received invaluable help in defeating the Brahman King of Sind from certain tribes of Jāts and Meds who were smarting under the tyranny of their native rulers. But so far from rewarding them for the services they had rendered to the cause of Islam he reimposed upon them and their chiefs all the disabilities from which they had suffered under the Brahman rule. Moreover, the Arab conquest let loose upon Sind a motley horde of greedy adventurers who when a less firm hand than that of Muhammad Kāsim held the reins of government maltreated and fleeced the Hindu inhabitants unmercifully. It was not until the Musalman invaders had made India their

[1] Elliot's *History of India*, vol. i, pp. 182–191.

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home and the Aryan traditions of India had been grafted upon the wild Arab stem that Islam took its place, at least for a time, as a civilising power in the world.

The Arab historians give conflicting accounts of the tragic end of Muhammad Kāsim. One states that he was recalled and tortured to death by order of the Khalif Sulaiman. But the majority declare that the two virgin daughters of the Brahman king Dāhir, who had been sent to Baghdad for the Khalif Walid's harem, in revenge for their father's death accused Muhammad Kāsim of having violated them, whereupon the furious Khalif wrote a letter in his own hand to his general and commanded him that immediately on receipt of it he should suffer himself to be sewn up in a raw cowhide and sent thus to the capital. Implicit obedience to the commands of the Khalif as Allah's representative on earth was the duty of every Musalman; so Muhammad Kāsim without hesitation ordered his people to sew him up in a hide. After two days he delivered his soul to God, while his body was placed in a chest and forwarded to the Khalif. When the corpse was shown to the Brahman girls they taunted the Khalif for his unreasonable cruelty, confessing that they had brought a false charge against the young general to bring about his death, because he had killed their father, destroyed their holy temples, and reduced the daughters of the 'twice-born' to slavery. The climax of the tragedy was that the Khalif ordered the two girls to be immured alive; or according to other accounts they were tied to horses' tails and dragged round the city until they were dead.[1]

As the Khalifate of Baghdad grew more effete and corrupt, after the extinction of the Abbasīd dynasty, it ceased to exercise any control over the province of Sind. From a political point of view the Arab conquest of Sind was a comparatively insignificant event in the Muhammadan world, and it has been treated as such by Anglo-Indian historians. But the importance of the conquest for its effect upon the whole culture of Islam has been little understood. For the first time the nomads of the

[1] Elphinstone's *History of India*, vol. i, p. 437.

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Arabian desert, with their more cultured brethren of the Arabian littoral, fired with the religious fervour of the Prophet of Mekka, found themselves in the holy land of the Aryans in close contact with Indo-Aryan civilisation, which from all points of view, politically, economically, and intellectually, had reached a far higher plane than their own. The Sultans of Sind entered into friendly relations with the powerful Hindu kings of the Rāshtrakūta line, who permitted the Arabs not only to establish mercantile settlements within their dominions along the west coast, but to build mosques and live according to the laws of Islam.

To the poetic imagination of the Arab tribesmen, India, with its gorgeous temples and monasteries carved in the living rock, its palace-fortresses and magnificent irrigation works of massive masonry, must have seemed a land of wonders, of djinns and great magicians. In all the arts of peace India then stood at the pinnacle of her greatness. The Arab conquered with his sword, but came to learn at the Mother's feet the wisdom which had inspired his own great Prophet. The mullās of Islam, disgusted though they might be with the outward forms of popular Hindu ritual, soon learnt that the formula " There is one God and Muhammad is His Prophet," which seemed to them so great an inspiration, was no revelation to the Hindu philosopher. The Arab chieftains might hate the Kshatriya warrior and despise the Buddhist and Brahman monk, but they were charmed by the skill of Indian musicians and the cunning of the Hindu painter. Their young fighting men discovered that the lotus-eyed maidens of the ' twice-born ' were as fair as the houris of their desert dreams. The Indian craftsmen were as indispensable to the Muslim city-builders as they had been to the Indo-Aryan kings. The dome of the temple mandapam, shorn of its exuberant symbolism, which was so offensive to the unsophisticated mentality of the Arab—because the things it spoke of were beyond the range of his philosophy—became the dome of the Muslim mosque and tomb. The simplified symbolism of Muslim ritual was all borrowed from India. The pointed arch of the prayer carpet and *mihrāb*—

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afterwards the characteristic feature of Saracenic architecture—was the symbolic arch of the Buddhist and Hindu shrine. The 'horseshoe' arch was the sun-window of Buddhist *chaitya* halls and Hindu temples. The cathedral mosques of Muslim royalty were oriented like the Vishnu temple, and their entrances corresponded to the temple gopurams and the gates of the Indo-Aryan village. The *minars* of the mosque were adaptations of Indian Towers of Victory, which were an elaboration of Indo-Aryan royal standards. Finally, under Turkish domination, the ensign of Islam became the crescent moon, Siva's bow, which had been the symbol of India—'the Land of the Moon'—or of India's holy land, Āryāvarta, ages before the Prophet of Mekka was born.

In Sind the Arab sheikhs had their first practical lessons in Indo-Aryan statecraft under the guidance of their Brahman officials. They learnt to adapt their own primitive patriarchal polity to the complicated problems of a highly organised system of government evolved by centuries of Aryan imperial rule. Soon after the Arabs established themselves in the Indus valley the victory of Charles Martel at the battle of Tours saved Western Europe from Muslim rule, and the empire of Charlemagne (A.D. 771–814) was the political counterpoise in the West to the Khalifate of Baghdad under the Abbasīd dynasty. It was in Mesopotamia, especially in the glorious days of Harūn-al-Raschid (A.D. 786–809), that the foundations of Saracenic culture were laid. The court language, etiquette, and literary accomplishments were borrowed from the Iranian branch of Aryan civilisation, in the centre of which the founders of the Abbasīd dynasty had been nurtured. But all the scientific elements which formed Arabic scholarship and in later times made it famous in Europe—philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine—were in the eighth century borrowed directly from India. Through the Arab occupation of the Indus and Euphrates valleys Islam was enabled to tap the inexhaustible resources of India, spiritual and material, and to become the agents for their distribution over the whole of Europe—a relationship which continued to exist long after the outlying territories of

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Islam in Europe had asserted their independence of the Khalifate of Baghdad.

Every student of the history of Arab civilisation must recognise the great impetus which it gave to European learning; but Musalman historians are prone to ignore the debt of the Arabs to Indo-Aryan culture, and thus to form an exaggerated opinion of the creative work of Islam in India. The knowledge of chemistry, medicine and pharmacy, mathematics and astronomy which the Arabs disseminated in Europe was almost wholly derived from Indian sources. Their sudden intellectual awakening and great devotion to learning can hardly be attributed to the influence of the teaching of Islam, which made the Qurān the depository of all knowledge necessary for the spiritual and intellectual sustenance of the faithful. It was not in the Western schools of the Dark Ages that they could have caught the enthusiasm of the scholar. The great universities of North-western India, which were famous throughout Asia for the very sciences in which the Arabs afterwards excelled, had all the traditions of scholarship and the subtle intellectual atmosphere which stimulate the mental activity of the student. And in the early days of the Arab conquests, before Islam could boast of any universities of its own, these were the schools to which high-born Arab youth in Persia and India would go in quest of knowledge.

In the early days of the Arab occupation of Sind, while it still formed part of the Khalifate, Indian pandits brought to the court of Mansūr at Baghdad the celebrated works of Brahmagupta, the *Brahmāsiddhānta* and *Khandakhādyaka*, which were translated by Muslim scholars and formed the basis of Arabic astronomical knowledge.[1] In the palmy days of the great Harūn the influence of Indian scholarship was supreme at the Baghdad court. The most trusted friends and advisers of the Khalif, belonging to the Barmak family, were said to be descendants of the abbot of a Buddhist monastery in Balkh, whence the ruling dynasty itself had come. Through their influence Hindu physicians were brought to Baghdad to

[1] *Alberuni's India*, Sachau's translation, p. xxxi.

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organise hospitals and medical schools. Hindu scholars helped to translate into Arabic many of the principal Sanskrit works on philosophy, logic, mathematics, medical science, and other subjects.[1] The high-born youth of Arabia began to join the crowd of students which gathered from all parts of Asia in the great universities of India. Taksha-silā, the university specially noted for its medical schools, would have been the most accessible to the students of Baghdad through the Arab command of the sea and river communications.

Although after the glory of the Abbasīd Khalifs was eclipsed Arabic scholars turned to the Hellenic branch of Aryan learning for further inspiration, it was India and not Greece that taught Islam in the impressionable years of its youth, formed its philosophy and esoteric religious ideals, and inspired its most characteristic expression in literature, art, and architecture. The political relationship between Baghdad and India ended when Sind became independent of the Khalifate, and Arabian scholars ceased to occupy themselves with the translation of Indian writings when Hellenic thought began to attract them; but intercourse between India and Mesopotamia, which had existed even before Aryan kings ruled in Babylon, was not broken off by political changes. By the time the Arab dynasties which first made Islam a civilising influence had fallen, China, the fellow-student of Arabia in the universities of India, began to assist in the development of Muslim culture in Asia, until the conquest of Hindustan by the Musalman armies brought Islam to its Motherland and enabled it to progress further in the paths of peace under the most liberal of the Muhammadan sovereigns of India.

It must, however, be recognised that the Arabs in Europe soon made themselves independent of Indian teaching and developed schools of their own which gave a new impetus to scientific research. The follower of Islam, though he might draw upon Indian sources of knowledge, would on conscientious grounds refuse to recognise the religious basis upon which all Hindu teaching was formulated; and as he had no scientific

[1] *Alberuni's India*, Sachau's translation, pp. xxxi–xxxii.

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Sāstras of his own he would naturally seek to create them by methods of original research. Through this secularisation of Hindu religious knowledge the Arabs laid the foundation of Western experimental science, which has often appropriated to itself the credit of discoveries which really belong to Buddhist and Hindu India. But a distinction must always be drawn between Arab, or Saracenic, culture and that of Muhammadan India, for they always remained apart. The Arabs never won for themselves a permanent political footing in India, nor did the Western school of Islam ever take any strong hold upon the mentality or religious feeling of the Indian Musalman before English teachers with little or no knowledge of Indian history undertook the direction of education in India. Fortunately for the British Rāj, Indian Musalmans in remaining true to their Indian Mother have proved true to themselves.

The Arab governors of Sind after Muhammad Kāsim were not successful in enlarging the boundaries of the province, though they were at constant war with their Hindu neighbours on the east and north. The Abbasīd Khalifs made no organised attempt to pursue the conquest of India begun by Walid's general. On the other hand, they maintained very friendly intercourse with the Rāshtrakūta dynasty which ruled over the greater part of Western India. It was left to the Turki dynasties of Ghazni to carry out the systematic policy of plunder and massacre which gradually broke the economic strength of the Northern Hindu states and opened the way to the final subjugation of India by the Muhammadans.

But the victorious progress of Islam in India is not to be accounted for by external reasons. It was mainly due to the political degeneration of Āryāvarta which set in after the death of Harsha. While the south of India was being consolidated under the Chola rule, the north was split up into a number of independent states, the mutual jealousies of which blinded them to the dangers which threatened all from the constantly increasing strength of the enemy at their gates. The social programme of the Prophet, which, like the law of the Buddha, gave every true believer an equal spiritual status

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within the community of Islam, had precisely the same political effect in the Islamic world as Asoka's propaganda had in Āryāvarta—it made Islam a political and social synthesis and gave it an imperial mission. The peculiarly favourable geographical formation of India confined the political empire of Āryāvarta to the boundaries of India itself, but the dominions of the Khalifate lacked the physical demarcations which the Himālayas and the encircling ocean gave to the conquests of the Aryans in India, and thus the war-lords of Islam were constantly occupied with schemes of world-conquest. A united Āryāvarta offered an impenetrable front to the foreign invader. Disunion opened the gateways of the Himālayas and exposed the whole coast-line of Āryāvarta to attack.

Islam reached the zenith of its political strength at the critical period when the conflict between Buddhist philosophy and that of orthodox Brahmanism was a potent cause of political dissensions in Northern India. We have already noticed the effect of these dissensions as a contributory cause of the break-up of Harsha's empire. Islam had the immense advantage that, however much the faithful might quarrel over the distribution of the spoils of conquest, the dogmas of their spiritual faith were so simple and clearly stated that they gave little cause for disputes disturbing greatly the peace of the Musalman world or dividing it against itself, though a hundred sects might wrangle over minor points of ritual.

And, however fanatical the Muhammadan might be in his religious beliefs, he was rarely inspired by that intense desire to penetrate into the secrets of the Universe which made the Hindu so willing to give up all worldly attachments and seek communion with the Infinite in the seclusion of the monastery or in the peace of the forest asram. Islam, like the Law of Buddha, was a rule of life sufficient for the happiness of average humanity, content to take the world as it is and leave philosophers to wrangle over the cause of all things.

It was this passionate absorption in her spiritual quest of which Islam itself was but a faint reflection, which was at once the source of India's greatness and of her weakness.

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Buddhism especially, by its huge monastic organisation, helped to emasculate the manhood of India. The conquest of Sind by the Arabs was made easy by the fact that thousands of the male population had adopted the yellow robe for the sake of the easy life of the monastery. They were not like the monks of Nālanda and other great seats of Buddhist learning, for they were accounted as idle, dissolute fellows who had no regard for their own reputation or for the rules of their Order. The monastic system continued to absorb a large proportion of the flower of Indian manhood even after the development of Brahman philosophy added Buddhism to the Hindu synthesis, for every great Hindu temple which was built meant the dedication of public or private funds for the maintenance of priests, temple-servants, Brahman students and their gurus, sādhus and sannyāsins. And it was the period from the seventh century to the time of Mahmūd of Ghazni which was the most prolific in religious building—a time when Hindu monarchs vied with each other in the magnificence and number of their temples, when sacred hills were converted into cities of the gods, and when hundreds of thousands of skilled artisans were diverted from ordinary industrial pursuits to the pious labour of elaborating the embellishment of the temple service in stone, bronze, precious metals, and costly fabrics. This was an occupation which Western political economists regard as extravagantly wasteful and unprofitable when they compare it with the modern 'progressive' system which condemns millions of men, women, and children to the intellectual and moral degradation of factory labour, and employs the highest intelligence of the nation in the invention and manufacture of engines of destruction. The medieval system, however unscientific and wasteful it might have been, was abundantly productive. The amazing accumulation of wealth stored in Indian temple treasuries more than anything else excited the cupidity of the Muhammadan invaders and made their pious predatory raids highly profitable undertakings.

Brahmanical social science did indeed provide some checks against the flagrant abuses of monasticism which the demo-

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cratic principles of Buddhism tended to encourage. The merit of the much-abused caste system was that it formed an automatic process of selection of the fittest for every vocation in life; and so long as the barriers of caste were as easy to overcome as they were in pre-Muhammadan times it may be questioned whether the examination system or any other artificial selective method has proved itself superior from the point of view of eugenics, or economics, or of spiritual progress. Though the high ethical ideals of Buddhism had won for India the respect of the whole Eastern world, the weakness of its political and social economy was the chief cause of the success of the Muhammadan arms. Buddhism had fatally impaired the efficiency of the Kshatriya caste in the special work of national defence which Brahman sociology had assigned to it. For several centuries, indeed, the Rajput states which maintained their traditional organisation and martial ardour kept their own territories inviolate; but the political disorganisation of Northern India after the death of Harsha left so many weak spots in India's armour that the plateau of Rājputāna gradually became like a great hill-fortress invested on all sides by the armies of Islam. So long as Āryāvarta was united under a Chakra-vartin, or universal monarch, as in the time of the Mauryas and Guptas, and to some extent under Harsha, the chieftains of the Rajput communities owned allegiance to the central power, contributed their share of military service to the imperial armies, and merged their political individuality in the empire. But the gradual disintegration of the empire by the Muhammadan invasions instinctively impelled the fighting Kshatriyas scattered over the plains to rally round their hereditary chieftains in the hill-fortresses of Rājputāna and Central India, the natural home of the Kshatriya, hallowed by the most sacred associations of their Aryan ancestors.

The claims to Aryan ancestry of some of these fighting clans might be difficult to prove to the satisfaction of the ethnologist, and doubtless many of the foreign invaders of India had been admitted within the Aryan pale. But they were all united in devotion to Aryan traditions, and only Aryan honour and

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acknowledged claims to descent from Aryan heroes gave precedence in their order of nobility. Many of these fighting clans were Aryanised in the same way as the Dravidian dynasties had been in much earlier times, through their Aryan wives won in war with the Indo-Aryan tribes—the *rākshasa* form of marriage, or by right of capture, being one of those recognised by Hindu law as appropriate for Kshatriyas. Thus the claims to Aryan ancestry of some modern Rajput tribes may not be so illusory as they are reckoned by scientific investigators.

However that may be, the Rajputs who were Aryans only by right of valour became as proud of the name as the full-blooded Kshatriya, and as willing to lay down their lives in defence of their beloved Āryāvarta; though the mutual jealousies of different tribes gave rise to constant internecine warfare, which was always fatal to their power of resistance to a well-organised attack from beyond the frontier.

In the three and a half centuries which intervened between the death of Harsha and the invasions of Mahmūd of Ghazni there were a number of more or less important Rajput states, with a chain of great hill-fortresses as *points d'appui*, which kept up the ancient patriarchal traditions of Aryan culture in the form peculiar to the Kshatriya communities, such as survive to some extent in modern Rājputāna. In the history of these miniature Āryāvartas one does not hear so much of the ancient popular Assemblies which the Buddha took for the model of his Sangha, and which continued to have so much political influence in Southern India throughout medieval times. But the self-governing village communities under the protection of the Kshatriya fighting men continued to form the foundation of the body politic so long as the Rajput states remained independent and kept alive their Aryan traditions. The Sūdra cultivators were the proprietors of the soil, their rights being maintained by an immemorial tradition which the common law of Āryāvarta made inviolable. "In accordance with this principle," says Tod in the *Annals of Rajast'han*,[1] "is the ancient adage, not of Mewār only but all Rājputāna—

[1] Vol. i, p. 494.

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Bhōg ra dhanni Rāj ho : bhom ra dhanni ma cho—'The Government is owner of the rent, but I am the master of the land.'" Each commune with its guilds of craftsmen and industrial co-operative societies was "an *imperium in imperio*, a little republic, maintaining its municipal legislation independent of the monarchy, on which it relies for general support, and to which it pays the *bhōg*, or tax in kind, as the price of this protection." [1] The sovereign could dispossess the fighting chiefs who owed allegiance to him as the head of their clan of the estates they held in fief from the Crown; he was the landlord of the Khalisa demesne—the Crown lands which were leased to cultivators—and the proprietor of mines, marble quarries, and reserved forests. But over the lands of the peasant freeholders neither the sovereign nor the chief had any proprietary rights, except such as the peasant himself or the commune was willing to confer. Thus a chieftain, or *Thakur*, says Tod, when inducted into a perpetual fief by the Rāna, would try to insure himself against the loss of it by obtaining from the ryot or the commune a few acres of freehold land, with the knowledge that if through his sovereign's displeasure he should forfeit his seigniorial estates and cease to be a Thakur, his rights as a *Bhumia*, or owner, could never be set aside.[2] The State could call for the military service of these Bhumias, the yeomen of Rājasthan, but their land (*bhum*) was exempt from the *jurīb* (measuring rod), it was never assessed, and they only paid a quit-rent, in most cases triennial, and a war-tax—the *khur-lakur*.

The supreme ruler of these Rajput states had doubtless many means of oppression and exaction, but he was far from being an irresponsible despot like a Muhammadan Khalif or Sultan. The petty chieftain was as jealous as his overlord of his own rights and those of his retainers; and the assembly of the chieftains which was summoned to advise upon important State affairs was a real check upon the abuse of sovereign power. There was a well-regulated distribution of political and civil rights throughout the different grades of society,

[1] Tod's *Annals of Rajast'han*, vol. i, p. 495. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 496.

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from the highest to the lowest, kept in balance and adjusted from time to time, not by formal Acts of Parliament, but by the highly developed culture and religious sense of the people, which made the common law of the land—the Dharma—as sacred as the Vedas and binding upon the monarch as well as the meanest peasant. It is this culture and religion which, in spite of Western 'education,' make the Rajput of to-day as loyal to the British Rāj as he was to his Mogul overlord when the wise statesmanship of Akbar won the alliance of the chiefs of Rājputāna.

The *Annals of Rajast'han* contain references to the struggles with the Arabs in which the famous citadel of Chitor became the chief rallying-point of the Rajput clans, as it was during the subsequent attacks of the Turks under Mahmūd and those of the Moguls under Bābur and his successors. Here, it is said, the son of Dāhir found a refuge after his father's kingdom was lost. It is interesting to note that the Hindu chroniclers in referring to their Arab enemies of this time always applied to them the name of the ancient foes of the Aryans in Mesopotamia, the 'Asuras,'[1] thus definitely associating the Arabs with their Semitic ancestors, the Assyrians. In other respects the conditions of Āryāvarta brought back the ancient heroic times. The fighting ground upon which the Rajput chieftains were struggling with the Arab invaders was the scene of the great Aryan epic, the Mahābhārata. Close to Indraprastha, the Delhi of that time, was the field of Kurukshetra, where the Pāndavas and Kauravas met in deadly conflict. Panchāla, one of the great Rajput states which took part in the struggle, was known in Aryan legends as the kingdom over which, when the Great War was ended, the Brahman who taught the Pāndavas the use of divine weapons, the wise Drona, ruled. Mālwā, under its ancient name of Avanti, or the kingdom of Ujjain, had been also one of the earliest centres of Aryan culture, its university having been famous even in the time of the Buddha.

The epic times were also recalled by the constant quarrels between themselves, or with their neighbours in the Dekhan,

[1] Tod's *Annals of Rajast'han*, vol. i, p. 247.

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which occupied the attention of these different Indo-Aryan states when they were not forced to repel the attacks of the Arab armies. But the epigraphical record in which the student can find the somewhat dreary details of this internecine strife—so far as archaeological research has gone—should not make the historian overlook the fact that the centuries immediately before the Muhammadan conquest of India were as rich in art and literature and in splendid works of public utility as the palmy days of the Great Moguls, for in spite of the ravages of Turk and Mongol much remains to testify to it even in the present day. In the eighth century the court of Yasovarman, Rāja of Kanauj, was distinguished for its dramatists, among them Bhavabhūti, author of *Mālatimādhava* and other famous Sanskrit plays. Rājasekhara, noted as the author of the drama *Karpūra-manjurī*, was a minister of Mahendrapāla, one of Yasovarman's successors at the end of the ninth century. The Paramāra dynasty of Mālwā, founded in the ninth century, well maintained the ancient fame of the Ujjain court for literary and artistic culture. The poems of Mūnja, the seventh rāja (974–995), have been handed down to the present day; he was renowned for his scholarship and literary gifts as well as for his skill at arms. His nephew Bhoja (1018–1060), who was contemporary with Mahmūd of Ghazni, revived the glorious memories of the Gupta dynasty by his own accomplishments and those of his court poets, master-builders, artists, and scientists. "His fame," says Mr Vincent Smith, ".as an enlightened patron of learning and a skilled author remains undimmed, and his name has become proverbial as that of the model king according to the Hindu standard. Works on astronomy, architecture, the art of poetry, and other subjects are attributed to him. . . . A mosque at Dhārā now occupies the site of Bhoja's Sanskrit college, which seems to have been held in a temple dedicated appropriately to Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning." [1]

The narrow sectarian will regard the extraordinary development of temple-building in this period only as evidence of

[1] *Early History of India*, 2nd edit., p. 365.

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21. Kandarya Mahādeva Temple, Khajurāho

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profound superstition and moral depravity, in ignorance of the fact that in a religious system founded not merely upon dogmas but upon a science of social life the temple combined the service of God with various works of public utility, instruction, and recreation. Many of the great temples, like those at Khajurāho,[1] with which the Chandēla and other dynasties adorned their capitals, served not only as schools for secular as well as religious instruction: the series of halls with their splendid domes and sculptured pillars which formed the approaches of the sacred shrine were the assembly hall, theatre, and music-hall of the people. The economic needs of the community were not less sumptuously provided for by the rulers of these Rajput states. All over the country they administered are ruins of the great irrigation works by which they both assisted agriculture and added to the amenities of popular life, in which the Rajput monarch took a much larger share than was usually the case in other aristocratic systems of government. Bhoja of Mālwā added to his fame as a patron of arts and letters by the great artificial lake of Bholpur, 250 square miles in extent, created by throwing embankments of solid masonry across the watershed of a circle of hills. The name of the Muhammadan king in the fifteenth century who upheld the glory of Islam by destroying it has not been recorded. The rājas of the Chandel dynasties and many others of the warrior chieftains who came into prominence at this time were equally active in temple-building as in promoting these great irrigation works, and some of these still remain to fertilise and beautify the valleys between the hill-forts of Mālwā, Rājputāna, and Central India.

Before Mahmūd of Ghazni broke through the defences of Hindustan by his successive raids, the Rajput chieftains presented a much more solid front to the invader than they did in later times. Most of the territory now known as Rājputāna, together with some of the districts of the Panjab and the present United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, acknowledged the suzerainty of a powerful Rajput, King Nāgabhata, who in

[1] See *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, by the author, pp. 208–212.

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810 had conquered Kanauj and made it his capital. Kanauj after the death of Harsha remained the bone of contention for all the princes of Āryāvarta who aspired to be a Chakravartin or universal monarch. At the close of the eighth century it had been more than once attacked by the kings of Kashmīr: at the beginning of the ninth Dharmapāla, King of Bengal, had dethroned its then ruler and made the Kanauj state tributary to him. The capture of the city by Nāgabhata marked him out as the premier chief of Rājasthan.

Nāgabhata was the head of the Gūrjaras, one of the fighting clans of foreign descent which had been admitted into the Aryan pale in the troublous times of the Hun invasions and had formed themselves into a Rajput state, having its capital at Bhīnmāl, or Srimāl, not far from Mount Abu. One of Nāgabhata's predecessors, Vatsarāja, had distinguished himself by defeating Gopāla, the King of Bengal, who apparently attempted to lay hands on the former provinces of Harsha's empire. The kingdom of Kanauj, or Panchāla, under its Gūrjara ruler formed a barrier against hostile incursions into the Gangetic plain which none of the Arab rulers of Sind were able to penetrate. Muhammad Kāsim was on the point of making the attempt when he received the fatal letter from the Khalif which ended his brilliant career as a general. The Gūrjara kingdom maintained its supremacy over the Rajput clans for over a century, and perhaps might have continued to hold the Muslims at bay if it had not been weakened by its wars with the Rāshtrakūta kings, one of whom, Indra III, captured Kanauj in A.D. 916, though he did not succeed in retaining possession of it.

The eastern boundary of the Gūrjara kingdom was conterminous with that of Gaur, or Bengal, which under the Pāla dynasty continued the zealous patronage of Buddhism which the Sangha had enjoyed in the days of Harsha. The ancient Magadha country, now known as Bihār, 'the Land of Monasteries,' remained its home province, with Pātaliputra as its capital. Except for the Nepalese and Tibetan invasion previously recorded nothing definite is known of the history of

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GAUR, OR BENGAL.

Bengal and Bihār for nearly a century after Harsha's death. About A.D. 730, however, Gopāla, the first of the Pāla dynasty—so called from the suffix signifying 'Protector' or 'Defender' which terminated the names of these kings—began to revive the glory of Magadha, but was checked in the attempt to recover its western provinces by Vatsarāja, the Rajput chief of Gūrjara. Foiled in his ambition to bring the 'Five Indies' under his banner, Gopāla, like Harsha, sought to win undying glory in "the field of religious merit" by devoting the rich resources of his kingdom to the building and endowment of larger and more splendid monasteries and temples for the members of the Order. His successor, Dharmapāla, 'the Defender of the Faith,' came to the throne towards the end of the eighth century, and is said to have reigned for sixty-four years. He renewed Gopāla's attempt to extend his dominions westward, and so far succeeded that about A.D. 800 he defeated and deposed Indrāyudha, the King of Kanauj, but Nāgabhata's capture of the city soon afterwards put an end to Dharmapāla's plans of conquest in that direction, while it was equally effective in protecting the rich monasteries and temples of Bihār from any attack from the Arab marauders. Bengal was thus secured from the onslaughts of Islam until the end of the twelfth century, for although Mahmūd of Ghazni sacked the city in 1018 he did not venture to push further east. All the Pāla kings remained faithful to Buddhism, and continued to reign in Bengal until Qutb-ud-dīn's armies under Muhammad ibn Bakhtiyar captured Nūdiah and laid waste Bihār. But about 1060 one of the local rājas of the Sēna family ceased to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Pāla kings, and by setting up an independent rāj in the eastern part of Bengal accelerated the process of disintegration which brought Āryāvarta to ruin.

Among the different independent states which make up the political history of the period after the death of Harsha down to the invasions of Mahmūd of Ghazni, Kashmīr holds a conspicuous if not a distinguished place. The peculiar situation of the valley of Kashmīr, enclosed by a circle of Himālayan

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mountains, and only accessible in a few places by long and difficult passes, gives its inhabitants a character of their own different from those of the outside world, which few of them ever entered or knew except by listening to travellers' tales. The detached life they led would make their history a study by itself, and in the twelfth century A.D. Kashmīr found an historian in a learned Brahman, Kalhana, the son of the Kashmīr King Harsha's minister, Canpaka. But into the psychological causes which led to the total disregard of the first principle of Aryan self-government, self-control, the dissolute life of most of its kings and the tyranny of the feudal landowners, Kalhana does not enter. Perhaps they may be found in the indolence and ignorance of the Brahman and Buddhist intellectuals, by which they gradually lost the political and social influence they enjoyed in Āryāvarta, in the Turkish and Tibetan connections of some of the later ruling dynasties, and in the grape vine of the valley of Kashmīr, the garden city of the Himālayas.

In very early times Kashmīr had been occupied by Aryan tribes, and for many centuries their rulers joined in the strenuous life of Āryāvarta. It formed a part of the empire of Asoka, who is said to have built the ancient city of Srinagar, near the present capital. According to Kalhana, he also built not only many stūpas in honour of the Blessed One, but renewed the outer wall of the ancient Saiva shrine of Vijayeshvara. Having regard to the intimate connection between Saiva and Buddhist symbolism there would be no inconsistency in a pious Buddhist worshipping at a Saiva shrine. Nor would the history of the life of the Buddha make it improbable that he was himself a Saiva devotee, who by the inspiration of genius made the philosophy of asceticism applicable to everyday worldly life.

The complete Aryanisation of Kashmīr is attributed by Kalhana to a son of Asoka, Jalauka, who drove out the barbarian oppressors, and introduced Aryan settlers and an Aryan system of government. The early part of the Kashmīr chronicle is embellished with much legendary tradition, making Jalauka and other Kashmīrian rulers mighty conquerors who

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ruled over all Āryāvarta. Kashmīr was also a province of the Kushān Empire, and Buddhism flourished greatly there under Kanishka and Huvishka. The former is said to have held there the third General Assembly of the Sangha which was summoned to settle disputed points of doctrine and ritual, and Kalhana makes Nāgārjuna, the apostle of the Mahāyāna doctrine, " the sole lord of the land " at that time.[1] Kashmīr also came under the sway of the Hun tyrant Mīhiragula, " the terrible enemy of mankind [who] had no pity for children, no compassion for women, no respect for the aged." [2] In his time the valley was overrun by hordes of barbarians, and the people knew the approach of the Hun armies by the vultures and crows which flew ahead of them. Evil-minded as the tyrant was, says Kalhana, he yet sought to win religious merit by building Saiva shrines and endowing Brahman monasteries, which the lowest of the 'twice-born,' as vile as their protector, did not disdain to accept.

In the seventh century the Kashmīr rulers did not, apparently, acknowledge Harsha of Thanēshar's suzerainty, though one of them was forced to surrender a precious relic, a tooth of the Buddha, which the Emperor coveted. At the time of Hiuen-Tsang's visit Buddhism was on the decline, but the King of Kashmīr was powerful enough to exact tribute from the kingdom of Taksha-silā and other states lying at the foot of his own mountain walls. The decadence of Kashmīr, politically and socially, seems to have begun with its more or less complete isolation from the rest of Āryāvarta. Kalhana's chronicles bring out clearly an important principle of Indo-Aryan polity, the power vested in the ministerial Council for checking the arbitrary conduct of the monarch, and for altering the line of succession when the interests of the State demanded it. Thus Yudhisthira I was expelled from his kingdom for misconduct, and Kalhana pathetically describes the fallen King's departure from his capital, the distress of the citizens at seeing the sorry plight of his delicately nurtured

[1] *Rājatarangini*, i, 173 (Stein's translation).
[2] *Ibid.*, i, 293.

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Queen, and the misfortunes which overtook the royal party on their march to the frontier: "Marching on the lovely mountain paths, and seeking when tired the shade of the trees, he forgot by dint of his [daily] halting and marching his truly great misfortune. But when roused by the shouts of the low [hill-] folk, which reached his ear from afar, he appeared to sink back, as it were, into depths along with the waters of the mountain torrents. When his wives, whose figures were as delicate as the beautiful young shoots of the lotus-stalks, had passed through the forest regions, strongly scented with the fragrance of the various shrubs and herbs, and through the slippery [beds of the] mountain-streams with their rocks beaten by the tossing water, they bent their bodies over their laps and swooned from fatigue. When the King's wives, after casting a long glance at the distant land from the height of the mountain-boundary, threw all at once handfuls of flowers as a farewell offering, even the swarms of birds nesting in the mountain ravines cried plaintively in their excitement, and buried their beaks in their plumage spread out on the ground." [1]

Similarly, in the history of the new dynasty brought in from abroad to fill the vacant throne, Kalhana records that an able and much ill-treated minister, Sandhimati, who had resisted the arbitrary conduct of the king, "consented to the prayer of the citizens to rule the country" when the throne again became vacant (*Rāj.*, ii, 116). Again, when the Gonanda dynasty became extinct it was by the election of the ministerial Council, as representing the voice of the people, that a prince of the Kārkota line was consecrated "with sacred water poured out from golden jars" (ii, 528). The traditional authority of the Supreme Council of State made one of the fundamental differences between Indo-Aryan polity and that of Islam, in which the sovereign ruled by divine right—derived from his descent from the Prophet, or bestowed upon him by the Khalif as the Prophet's representative, or won by the Prophet's own weapon, the sword.

With the Kārkota line the chronicles of Kashmīr begin to

[1] *Rājatarangini*, i, 369–371 (Stein's translation).

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rest on a firmer chronological foundation. After narrating the pious benefactions and love affairs of the first of the dynasty Kalhana sings the prowess of Lalitāditya Muktapīda, a great warrior, who about A.D. 740, or twenty-eight years after the Arab conquest of Sind, defeated Yasovarman, King of Kanauj. He also conducted many victorious campaigns against the Tibetans and Dards, and against the Turks, who had established a kingdom to the north of Sind on the upper waters of the Indus and in the Kabul valley. Lalitāditya seems to have had some family connections with the Turks of this region, for his minister, Cankuna, who filled his treasury with gold by his magical power, came from there, and Shāhiya Turks, among others, were appointed by the King to the five high offices of State created to control the eighteen administrators of the ancient Aryan *régime* instituted by Asoka's son. In his conduct towards his conquered foes, and in his political testament bequeathed to his successors, Lalitāditya certainly seemed to be inspired by Turkish rather than Indo-Aryan principles: "Those who dwell there in the mountains difficult of access should be punished, even if they give no offence; because sheltered by their fastnesses they are difficult to break up if they have once accumulated wealth. Every care should be taken that there should not be left with the villages more food-supply than required for the year's consumption, or more oxen than wanted for the tillage of their fields; because, if they keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable Dāmaras and strong enough to neglect the commands of the King" (iv, 346–348). Evidently here is the secret of Cankuna's magical power in filling the King's treasury with gold.

However, Lalitāditya, when not intoxicated, seems to have been a wise and liberal ruler of his own people: both he and his Prime Minister were active in promoting beneficent public works of a religious and economic character. He distributed the water of the Vitasta to various villages by constructing a series of water-wheels. Cankuna's wife constructed a well "the water of which was as pure as nectar and gave

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health to the ailing" (*Rāj.*, iv, 212); and the ruins of the famous temple of Martānd still remain as a record of the great days of Lalitāditya.

After a reign of thirty-six years he was followed by Kuvalayāpīda, who soon found the cares of State too heavy for him and took refuge in a forest hermitage. Then followed a succession of dissolute and avaricious sovereigns who disgraced the traditions of their line and brought disorder into the country, redeemed partly by Jayāpīda, who at the close of the eighth century revived Sanskrit learning by attracting famous scholars and poets to his court. But towards the close of his reign he became the tool of unscrupulous court officials, began to fleece his subjects unmercifully, and to victimise the Brahmans who dared to reprove him. Finally one of the 'twice-born,' Ittila, brought down the wrath of heaven upon the reckless monarch, and he died miserably, like Herod, eaten of worms.

The character of Lalitāpīda, Jayāpīda's son and successor, is summed up by the Brahman historian of Kashmīr in unqualified terms. He was "the slave of his passions and did not attend to his regal duties; the kingdom became the prey of courtesans and was defiled by immorality. He squandered the riches which his father, condemned to hell, had accumulated by wicked deeds, on buffoons, and the parasites who got a foothold in the royal palace initiated him into the arts of whoredom" (*Rāj.*, iv, 661–663). The climax was reached when Brihaspati, his son by a low-caste concubine, succeeded him. The government was seized by Brihaspati's maternal uncles, and "these low-born persons who knew no restraint in their actions" conspired together to put their nephew to death. They then put a puppet of the Kārkoṭa line upon the throne, and won popularity for themselves by patronage of religious foundations and a lavish distribution of their ill-gotten wealth, until the kingdom was torn to pieces by the quarrels of their several factions. In the chaos which ensued the feeble remnant of the Kārkota line was almost exterminated, while the descendants of Brihaspati's low-caste relatives increased their prestige. Thereupon a wise minister, Shūra, one of the class of Dāmaras,

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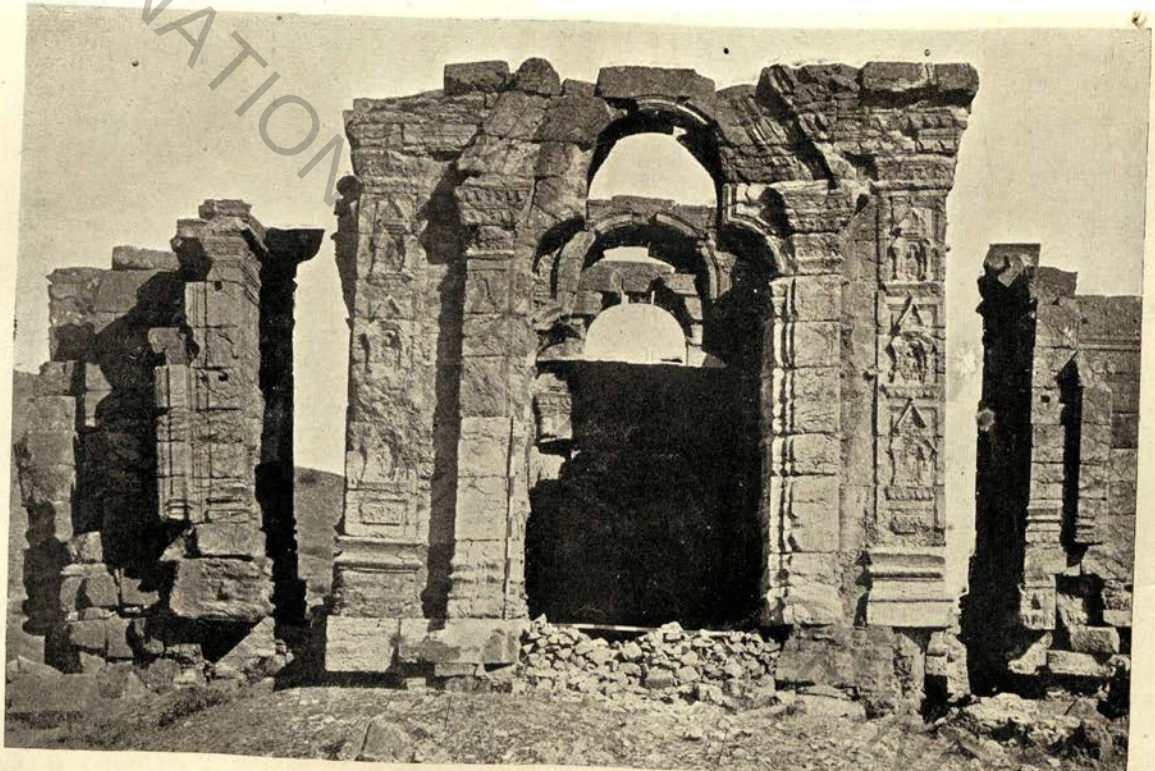

22. SŪRYA TEMPLE AT MARTĀND

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or feudal landlords, took the part of Avantivarman, a grandson of the eldest of Brihaspati's uncles, Utpāla, and declared him a fit person to rule the kingdom.

Avantivarman (A.D. 855–883) fully justified the minister's choice, for, after seating himself firmly on the throne with Shūra's help, he restored peace and prosperity to Kashmīr, causing learning, "whose flow had been interrupted, to descend again upon this land." The extant works of the scholars of his court occupy a prominent position in the Sanskrit literature of old Kashmīr.[1] But Avantivarman's renown as a benefactor of Kashmīr rests chiefly on the great engineering and irrigation works which he promoted through the skill of his able public works minister, Sūyya, who no doubt was one of the master-builders versed in the Silpa-Sāstras whose achievements in works of this kind had done so much for the material prosperity of India. Kashmīr, says Kalhana, had been but little productive before this time on account of the devastating floods from the overflowing of the Mahāpadma Lake. King Lalitāditya had done something to improve matters, but under the misgovernment of his successors the country had reverted to its former condition, and by the constant flooding of the land the price of one *khāri* of rice had risen to ten hundred and fifty *dīnnāras* in times of famine, and two hundred in times of great abundance. Sūyya, who by his religious merit, says Kalhana, achieved in a single birth the holy work which Vishnu accomplished in four incarnations—the raising of the earth from the water—by the granting of land to worthy Brahmans, the building of stone embankments to hold up the water, and the subjugation of the water-demon Kālīya, reduced the price of one khāri to thirty-six dīnnāras (*Rāj.*, v, 144–146).

The methods by which this great work was achieved are summarised by Sir M. A. Stein as follows: "The systematic regulation of the course of the Vitasta, down to the rock-bound gorge where it leaves the valley, largely reduced the extent of the water-locked tracts along the banks of the river and the damage to the crops caused by floods. The construction

[1] Stein's Introduction to *Rājatarangini*, p. 98.

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of new beds for the river at points threatened by inundation-breaches was among the measures designed to effect the same object. The change thus made in the confluence of the Vitasta and its most important tributary, the Sindhu, can still be clearly traced, thanks to Kalhana's accurate topographical data. It shows alike the large scale and the systematic technical basis of Sūyya's regulation. The result of the latter was a great increase of land available for cultivation, and increased protection against disastrous floods, which in Kashmīr have ever been the main causes of famine." (Introduct., p. 98.)

Several terrible famines are recorded in Kalhana's chronicle: one of uncertain date, but before the beginning of the Kārkota dynasty, in which the ripening autumn crops were ruined by a heavy fall of snow. In this case the king, Tunjina, and his pious queen were unremitting in their efforts to succour their afflicted subjects. But in A.D. 917–918, when the crops were destroyed by floods, both the ministers and the soldiers (*Tantrins*) enriched themselves at the expense of the famine-stricken people, and the land became "like one great burial-ground." Again in 1099, when a similar calamity occurred, the profligate Harsha, so far from relieving the people's misery, "tormented them through the *kāyasthas*" [1] (*Rāj.*, vii, 1226).

From the time of Avantivarman's death until the beginning of Mahmūd of Ghazni's invasions in the eleventh century, page after page of the chronicles of Kashmīr record only the bestiality and savagery of the low-born adventurers who misgoverned the country. There is, however, one interesting incident worth noticing which occurred about A.D. 939, when the commander-in-chief, Kamala-Vardhana, was in a position to seize the throne by force of arms. He hesitated to use the auspicious moment from a desire to obtain religious sanction for his claims beforehand and to win the intellectuals to his side by constitutional means. He called the Brahmans together and canvassed them in his desire for election to the throne. "Make a countryman of yours, strong and full-grown, king," said he (*Rāj.*, v, 458). Kalhana ridicules Kamala-Vardhana's *naïveté*

[1] Revenue-collectors.

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and ignorance of politics, and the contempt he pours upon the incompetence and vacillation of his caste-fellows in those days may have been deserved. But to the historian the interest lies, firstly, in the fact that in spite of the corruption and violence of the times an appeal was made to the traditional law of kingship instead of to force of arms; and, secondly, in the unexpected result of the Assembly's vote, which was that Kamala-Vardhana's claims were set aside in favour of a Brahman candidate, Yashaskara, who was duly consecrated as king by the ancient Vedic rite of *abhisheka* and reigned for forty-seven years afterwards.

The choice, moreover, proved to be a happy one for the country. Yashaskara, says Kalhana, "made the *Krita Yuga* come back again." He purified the administration so that "the officials who had plundered everything found no other occupation but to *look* after agriculture. . . . The Brahmans, devoted to their studies, did not carry arms. The Brahman gurus did not drink spirits as they sang their chants: the ascetics did not get children, wives, and crops. . . . Astrologer, doctor, councillor, teacher, minister, Purohita, ambassador, judge, clerk—none of them was then without learning" (*Rāj.*, v, 8–13). But though generally a wise ruler he was not altogether free from the vices of his predecessors, and allowed himself to come under the control of a courtesan, Lallā, and by the close of his reign Kashmīr was again plunged into disorder.

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PART II

THE MUHAMMADAN CONQUEST AND THE INDO-ARYAN RENAISSANCE

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Map of
INDIA
UNDER MUHAMMADAN RULE
To illustrate Part II
Miles
50 0 100 200 300 400
KASHMIR
PANJAB
RAJPUTANA
Sindh
Malwa
Gujerat
Kachh
Orissa
BENGAL
NEPAL
Bhutan
ASSAM
TIBET
Brahmaputra R.
Indus R.
Ganges R.
Godavari R.
Kistna R.
Mahanadi R.
Narbada R.
Tapti R.
Jumna R.
Sutlej R.
Kabul
Peshawar
Attock
Rawal Pindi
Srinagar
Lahore
Multan
Delhi
Agra
Allahabad
Lucknow
Benares
Patna
Calcutta
Bombay
Poona
Haidarabad
Kolhapur
Madras
Mysore
Seringapatam
Trichinopoly
Negapattam
Madura
Tinnevelli
CEYLON
Ceylon
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CHAPTER I

MAHMŪD OF GHAZNI

THE preceding chapters have brought the history of Aryan rule in India down to the end of the tenth century, which saw Mahmūd upon the throne of Ghazni and the beginning of Turkish domination in Islam. The glory of the Abbasīd Khalifs had departed, for although the court of Baghdad kept up as much pomp and ceremony as in the days of Harūn-al-Raschid, the Khalif was a tool in the hands of his Turkish bodyguard, and the richest provinces of the empire no longer acknowledged his political supremacy. The power of the sword, by which the Prophet sought to win converts to his teaching, was turned against Islam itself; for though in matters of doctrine the Musalman might bow to the ruling of the Khalif, in the distribution of worldly goods, which his own good sword might win, he claimed the freedom of the true believer: the turbulent tribes of Central Asia, which Buddhism had hardly tamed, were enthusiastic converts to a creed which gave them unlimited scope for their predatory instincts.

In the first centuries after the death of Muhammad there had not been wanting in Islam the strong and resolute leadership necessary to control the forces let loose by the subversion of the existing social order, and probably the stern patriarchal discipline imposed by the Arab rulers upon their followers was a more effective civilising influence for many converts to the Faith than the idealism of the Christian and Buddhist doctrine imperfectly taught and learnt. But when the control of a master-mind was wanting the inherent weakness of the social theories of Islam became apparent, and in the general scramble for political power the most unscrupulous and daring adventurer had the better chance of the prize. The history of Islam at

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this period, as it is written by its own historians, is solely occupied with the varied fortunes of these bold adventurers —many of them men of strong character and great ability— and of the dynasties they founded.

The overpowering energy and enthusiasm with which Islam prosecuted its campaigns undoubtedly had a regenerating effect upon some of the old and effete civilisations it sought to uproot, and won it sympathy from many to whom its dogmatic teaching made no appeal. The Arab conquest had revived the national spirit of Persia, and the Persian converts from Zoroastrianism not only rivalled the Arabs in martial ardour, but contributed a rich store of their old Iranian culture to the treasury of Islam. Under the influence of Indian and Persian scholars the primitive philosophy of the Qurān had been expanded into the mystical interpretations of the Sufi school, by which the poetry of Islam became a lyrical version of the Vedānta. After the fall of the Ommayad dynasty the Persians became the intellectual leaders of Islam in Asia, with the Arabs and Turks as their disciples.

Before Mahmūd of Ghazni came upon the scene, three semi-independent Persian dynasties—the Tahirid, Saffārid, and Sāmānid, had ruled over some of the richest provinces of Central Asia, owing only a nominal allegiance to the Khalifate of Baghdad. Under the dynasty of the Sāmānids—so called from a Persian nobleman, Sāmān, a convert from Zoroastrianism, whose descendants had established themselves as rulers in Transoxiania—Alptagīn, a Turkish slave, had been promoted to the governorship of Khurāsan by Abdul Malik I (A.D. 954–961). On the death of the latter there was a dispute regarding the succession, and Alptagīn, having supported the losing side, thought it safer for himself and his retainers to leave Khurāsan. They accordingly made a raid toward the south and captured the stronghold of Ghazni, where he was able to defy the armies which Mansūr, Abdul Malik's son and successor, sent against him. Sabuktagīn, another Turkish slave, serving in Alptagīn's body-guard, who through his ability had become commander-in-chief, succeeded to the throne of Ghazni in 975, and quickly added Kandahar to his dominions. He then began to harry

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the 'infidels' of India and replenish his treasury by raids across the border. These incursions brought him into conflict with Jaipal, Rāja of Lahore, who rashly marched up the Kabul valley to attack the brigands in their lair; but his troops were badly equipped for mountain warfare, and suffering from the inclement climate were defeated by the hardy Turkish and other Central Asian horsemen. In this campaign Sabuktagīn's son Mahmūd, then only a boy of ten, is said by his biographer to have given "signal proofs of his valour and conduct."[1]

Mahmūd, though Sabuktagīn's eldest son, did not obtain his father's throne without a struggle, for his claims were disputed by a younger brother, Ismail, on the ground of his illegitimate birth—Mahmūd's mother having been a slave—a quarrel which has its humorous side, considering the antecedents of the father. The dispute having been settled in Mahmūd's favour by the usual argument, Ismail was confined in a fortress until his death, and Mahmūd ruled in Ghazni. Mahmūd was then nearly thirty years of age, with a strong and well-made figure; but his face was badly marked with the smallpox, and he is said to have complained that "nature had been so unkind to him that his appearance was positively forbidding."[2]

According to the standards of their time, Muhammadans are no doubt justified in declaring that Mahmūd "was endowed with all the qualities of a great prince and reflected lustre upon the faith."[3] He was a brilliant commander in the field, and as a dashing cavalry leader had no equal. According to Ferishta, his administration was so just that among his own turbulent subjects "the wolf and the lamb drank together at the same brook." But in Ghaznevide society ideas of justice did not comprehend much more than a fair distribution of the spoils of war among the spoilers; and as Mahmūd always had an unfailing supply of the indispensable material the tears of his subjects at his death were doubtless not unfeigned. Ferishta admits, however, that he had his weak points. First

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 16.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

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in his conduct towards Firdausi, in cheating him of part of his promised reward; and secondly in his exactions from his subjects in the latter part of his reign.[1] Nor does the story his biographer tells of his treatment of a citizen of Nyshapur speak much for the great Sultan's sense of justice. Hearing that this worthy person was immensely rich, Mahmūd summoned him to his presence and charged him with being an idolater and an apostate from the faith. The citizen replied that he was neither an idolater nor an apostate, but he was possessed of much wealth. The Sultan might take his money, but he should not rob him of his good name also. Mahmūd agreed to this proposition, and having fleeced him of all his property gave him a certificate under the royal seal of the purity of his religious tenets![2] On the other hand, when his ruling passion was not touched, Ferishta gives us to understand that Mahmūd was a man of his word and would deal even-handed justice even when his own near relatives were the transgressors. It must also be said that Mahmūd's avarice was not the sordid greed of a miser. Like other great war-lords he had a strongly developed 'will to power,' and money, won by fair means or foul, was the way to power.

Like Bābur he was fond of laying out pleasure-gardens in the Persian and Indian fashion, and had such catholic tastes that he admired immensely the Hindu temples of Mathurā, and, to the disgust of his devout followers, refrained from destroying them completely—probably, as Ferishta says, because the labour of doing so would have been excessive, and because he had richer spoil in view. After his return from this expedition, laden with immense booty from the plundered temples, he followed the usual custom of employing the Indian craftsmen who were among his prisoners in making his own capital vie in splendour with the great cities of India he had despoiled. Thus the Great Mosque of Ghazni, known by the name of 'the Celestial Bride,' was built of marble and granite, furnished with rich carpets and with lamps and

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 33.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

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candelabra of gold and silver. Near it Mahmūd founded a university, and with the zeal of the modern opulent curio-hunter furnished it with "a vast collection of curious books in various languages," and established "a museum of natural curiosities," probably a zoological collection such as the Great Moguls were fond of.

"When," says Ferishta, "the nobility of Ghazni perceived the taste of their king evince itself in architecture, they also endeavoured to vie with each other in the magnificence of their private palaces, as well as in public buildings which they raised for the embellishment of the city. Thus, in a short time, the capital was ornamented with mosques, porches, fountains, reservoirs, aqueducts, and cisterns, beyond any city in the East." Fergusson, the historian of Indian architecture, with a singular lack of critical judgment, classifies the buildings made for Mahmūd and his *parvenu* nobles as Pathān, and much exuberant rhetoric has been lavished on the artistic genius of the 'Pathān builders.' On the same principle, the *Shah-nāma*, the great epic of Mahmūd's court poet, Firdausi, might be called 'Pathān literature.' It may be conceded that Mahmūd, like many of the meanest of his subjects, was apt in the improvisation of a Persian verse, and could argue theological points with his mullās as ably as the 'Defender of the Faith' in our own Tudor times. But there is no warrant for giving either Mahmūd, or any of his promiscuous soldiery, credit for higher artistic or literary culture than other Turks, Tartars, or Pathāns of his time possessed.

Mahmūd exploited the culture of India and Persia as systematically and zealously as he plundered the temples of the 'infidels'; but he had no constructive genius as a statesman nor profound religious convictions. He would have sacked Baghdad with as little compunction as he plundered Somnāth, if the undertaking had seemed as profitable and as easy, for he did not hesitate to threaten the Khalif with death when the latter refused to give him Samarkand.[1] Like every other successful Turki adventurer of obscure origin, he was anxious,

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 53.

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for the prestige of his dynasty, to pose as a descendant of ancient Persian kings, and his court poets, as was their duty, supplied him with a pedigree and extolled his victories over the idolater, while they sang the glorious deeds of the Achaemenian line. The inconsistency of associating the feats of the 'Asylum of Islam' with those of the infidel fire-worshippers did not trouble Mahmūd's conscience until he was called upon to redeem his promise to pay for the great epic of his Poet Laureate.

In like manner Persian and Indian builders embellished Mahmūd's capital with "mosques, porches, fountains, reservoirs, aqueducts, and cisterns," so that the faithful might be benefited by the creative genius of the twin offspring of the ancient Aryan stock; but the innate savagery of the Turk was not subdued, either then or in later times, by the thin veneer of culture which it borrowed from these and other sources.

Madmūd made in all seventeen plundering raids into India, the first in 1001, when he defeated and took prisoner Jaipal, the Rāja of Lahore, whom he had met before in battle when he was serving under his father, Sabuktagīn. The rich spoil gathered in this expedition encouraged Mahmūd to repeat the adventure in the following year, with such success that the looting of the idolaters' temples became thereafter almost an annual State function and the main source of Mahmūd's revenue. The accounts of these expeditions are derived almost entirely from Muhammadan sources, and we need not believe that they were all of the nature of triumphal progresses, though their main object, that of loot, was comparatively easy to attain with the large force of well-mounted cavalry which Mahmūd skilfully led. The Sultan of Ghazni had the advantage of 'inner lines' and could direct his attack at unexpected points, before the numerous Hindu states opposed to him had time to settle their own differences and organise an effective defence. In the pitched battles he fought Mahmūd repeated the tactics of Alexander the Great, and by a skilful use of his cavalry and archers made the unwieldy war-elephants of the Indians a potent weapon in his own hands.

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The whole series of marauding expeditions was, moreover, organised with great military foresight. Having made his capital secure by the conquest of the Hindu kingdoms in the upper valley of the Indus, Mahmūd turned his arms against the Arabs in the northern part of Sind, which was then divided into two provinces with their respective capitals at Multān and Mansūra. The Amīrs of Sind were independent of the Khalifate of Baghdad. Multān had, it is said, paid tribute to Sabuktagīn, but had subsequently renounced the suzerainty of Ghazni: Mahmūd, by suddenly appearing before the city in 1010, not only forced the Amīr, Abul Fath Dāūd, to pay a heavy contribution to the Ghazni treasury, but secured an invaluable base for his subsequent expeditions. Thus, though Mahmūd always preferred the hills of Afghanistan to the plains of India for his headquarters, he was in a position four years later to venture an attack upon Thanēshar, which promised rich booty, for it was held in the same veneration by the idolaters as Mecca by the faithful.[1]

The news of the approach of the Musalman army roused all the neighbouring Hindu states to combine for the defence of the sacred city, but before they had time to do so Mahmūd had swooped down upon its temples, plundered them of their gold and silver images and the vast wealth of their treasuries, and returned to Ghazni with 200,000 captives to fill the harems of the faithful and furnish forced labour for the Sultan's public works. Mahmūd's capital thereafter, says Ferishta, "appeared like an Indian city, no soldier of the camp being without wealth, or without many slaves." It was after this successful foray that Mahmūd sent a letter to the Khalif, Al Kadir Billa-Abassy, requesting that his governors should surrender to him that part of Khurāsan which still remained subject to Baghdad. Finding the Khalif complacent he followed it up with a peremptory demand for the cession of Samarkand, supplementing this with a threat that in case of refusal he would march to Baghdad, put the Khalif to death and bring his ashes to Ghazni. This was too much, even for the weak successor of Harūn-al-Raschid,

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 50.

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and the laconic but spirited reply which he sent had the effect of "preventing Mahmūd from again urging the request."

Possibly the disastrous issue of his campaign in 1015, when he tried to penetrate into the valley of Kashmīr, sobered the royal freebooter for a time. He failed in his attempt to storm the fortress of Lohara, and on its homeward march his army, being misled by guides, fell into extensive morasses and many of his troops perished. But three years later he collected an army of 100,000 Turki and Afghan horsemen, and 20,000 foot, and set out with still richer loot in view—Mathurā, the sacred city of Krishna, and proud Kanauj, which "raised its head to the skies and which in strength and beauty might boast of being unrivalled." This daring project involved a three months' march from Ghazni, and there were seven formidable rivers to be crossed, but Mahmūd's skilful strategy was equal to the occasion. He had prepared for the expedition carefully by sending spies to survey the country,[1] and he found efficient guides among the Indians serving in his army. In order to conceal his real objective he marched along the foot of the Himālayas until the Jumna was reached, and crossing it captured the fort of Baran, the modern Bulandshahr. Then pushing rapidly southward he appeared before the gates of Mathurā, and having forced his way into the city with very little difficulty he gave it over to plunder, rapine, and massacre.

A vast quantity of gold, silver, and priceless gems was found in the temple treasuries, besides numbers of gold and silver images, which were broken up for the sake of the precious metal. The magnificence of the buildings, constructed of fine masonry and riveted with iron, excited Mahmūd's admiration, especially the principal temple in the middle of the city, regarding which he wrote to the governor of Ghazni: "If any should wish to construct a building equal to this, he would not be able to do it without expending an hundred thousand thousand red dīnārs, and it would occupy two hundred years,

[1] *Tārīkh Yamīnī*, Elliot's *History of India*, vol. ii, p. 41.

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even though the most experienced and able workmen were employed." [1]

Mahmūd did not tarry at Mathurā, but after giving orders for the temples to be burned with naphtha and fire, he pushed on with a picked force to Kanauj. The Rāja Rajya-pāla retreated across the Ganges on his approach, and the great city with its ancient temples shared the fate of Mathurā, the inhabitants who did not escape being massacred or taken to Ghazni to be sold as slaves. The account of the rest of the expedition is somewhat difficult to follow; but after capturing several hill-forts and penetrating into Bundēlkhand, where he defeated and killed a great Rajput chieftain, Chandra-pāl, Mahmūd returned in triumph to his capital with spoil in gold, silver, and gems beyond the dreams of avarice, and so many slaves that Ghazni became a market for merchants from distant cities and "the countries of Māwarāu-n nahr [Turkistan], 'Irāk, and Khurāsān were filled with them, and the fair and the dark, the rich and the poor were commingled in one common slavery." [2]

The crowning exploit of Mahmūd's career was the plunder of the great Saiva temple of Somnāth, on the seashore at the extreme south of the Surāshtra (Kāthiāwār) peninsula. The coast-line there is crescent-shaped, like Siva's bow, and the temple, facing the setting sun, was dedicated to Soma, the ancient Vedic deity representing Siva as the Moon-Lord. The name Surāshtra also connected the city with ancient Vedic ritual. The considerations which prompted Mahmūd to this adventure were probably two: first, that the field for profitable looting in other directions had been well exploited, and second, that an attack in that quarter would be the least expected by the infidels. No doubt he had obtained from his Indian spies accurate information of the fabulous wealth deposited in the temple, and the difficulties and dangers of the route only roused the adventurous spirit of his faithful followers.

So, invoking the aid of the Almighty, as all good bandits do, he set out in the autumn of 1025 with 30,000 horse. The route

[1] *Tārīkh Yamīnī*, Elliot's *History of India*, vol. ii, p. 44.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

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lay through the Musalman province of Sind, which was to a large extent under Mahmūd's control. At Multān he collected 30,000 camels with water and provisions for crossing the desert which lay between him and the fertile province of Surāshtra. He met with very little opposition until he reached Dabalwārah, two days' march from Somnāth. "The people of this place stayed resolutely in it, believing that Somnāth would utter his prohibition and drive back the invaders; but Mahmūd took the place, slew the men, plundered their property, and marched on to Somnāth." [1]

The great temple, enclosed by a strong fortress, was built upon the seashore, and washed by the waves at every recurring tide, so that the ocean itself joined in worship at the shrine of the Moon-Lord, Siva. A thousand Brahmans performed the daily service of this temple, and the daughters of the royal houses of India, it is said, danced the dance of the cosmic rhythm in front of Siva's shrine to the time-beat of the waves. When Mahmūd's army approached, the Hindu defenders hurled defiance at the Musalmans, telling them that Mahādeva would destroy them to the last man. But after a desperate assault lasting two days, Mahmūd's troops carried the outer defences and drove the Hindus through the city to the entrance of the great temple. A dreadful slaughter ensued. "Band after band of the defenders entered the temple to Somnāth, and with their hands clasped round their necks wept and passionately entreated him. Then again they issued forth to fight until they were slain and but few were left alive. These took to the sea in boats to make their escape, but the Musalmans overtook them, and some were killed and some were drowned." [2] Over fifty thousand Hindus perished in the assault and subsequent massacre. Mahmūd, it is said, obtained so much loot that no other king possessed anything equal to it. Somnāth was endowed with the revenue of more than ten thousand villages, and its treasury contained the pious offerings of centuries. The chains of the temple bells were of gold, weighing 200 *mans*.

[1] *Kāmilu-t Tawārīkh* of Ibn Asīr, Elliot's *History of India*, vol. ii, p. 470.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 470–471.

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There were canopies for the temple processions set with pearls and precious stones, and exquisitely jewelled lamps for lighting the shrine which contained the lingam, Siva's symbol, also set with gems of immense value. All of this, exceeding in value two millions of dīnārs, was carried off to Ghazni, and to complete the humiliation of the infidel the great stone lingam was also removed to serve as a doorstep for the mosque of 'the Celestial Bride.'

On his return march Mahmūd encountered a Rajput chieftain, who ineffectually tried to bar his passage, and met with serious difficulties in recrossing the desert owing to the treachery of a guide. According to one account he reduced to submission the lower province of Sind, with its capital Mansūra, the ruler of which was an apostate from Islam. He then returned to Ghazni through Multān.

Mahmūd did not long survive this *grand coup*. He died in 1030 at the age of sixty-three, after a reign of thirty-five years, and was buried, says Ferishta, with great pomp and solemnity at Ghazni. At his death the Panjab, Sind, and parts of the adjoining provinces acknowledged his suzerainty. Though he did not effect any permanent conquests in India, he opened the gates wide for his co-religionists. The almost invariable success of his arms added immensely to his prestige and brought Islam many adherents among the uncultured warlike clans of the north-west provinces of India, to whom fighting was a religion and victory in the field the highest proof of divine inspiration. Mahmūd was no bigot, and in his eyes the sinfulness of idolatry only called for the chastisement of the sword when it was accompanied by much portable property. In politics he was a realist of the modern type—the Khalif was no more to him than a Hindu rāja, and he was as successful in turning the mutual jealousies of Hindu states to his advantage as he was in plundering their temples and in squeezing the wealth of his own Musalman subjects.

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CHAPTER II

THE AFGHAN AND TURKISH SULTANS OF DELHI

FOR about a century and a half after Mahmūd's death there was a pause in the triumphant progress of Islam in India. In 1033 famine followed by a devastating plague raged all over Mesopotamia, Persia, and parts of India, where, says Ferishta, whole districts were entirely depopulated. The Ghaznevide Empire was soon brought into chaos by the usual disputes for the succession by the rival candidates, which, according to the recognised law of Islam, were settled on the principle that "dominion belongs to the longest sword." [1] Fresh hordes of Turks from Central Asia profited by the opportunity to claim their place in the sun. The Hindus in the Panjab also rose in revolt, and in 1043 the Rāja of Delhi, in alliance with other Rajput princes, recaptured Hanzi, Thanēshar, and Nāgarkot, which were garrisoned by Musalmans. They failed, however, in an attack upon Lahore, and most of the rest of Mahmūd's Indian feudatories remained firm in allegiance to the Ghaznevide Sultans, who from time to time made Lahore their capital, but were too much occupied in holding their Turkish enemies at bay to attempt to enlarge their Indian possessions.

The end of Ghazni and its dynasty was a fitting climax to the record of bloodshed, inhumanity, and self-indulgence which made its history. About the middle of the twelfth century the Afghans made themselves an independent principality at Ghūr, a mountain fortress between Ghazni and Herāt. In 1152 their chieftain, 'Alā-ud-dīn Hasan, incensed at the torture and execution of his brother by the Sultan Bairām,

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 98.

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advanced against Ghazni, and after a furious battle captured the city and gave it up to "flame, slaughter, and devastation." "The massacre which followed," says Ferishta, "continued for a space of seven days, in which pity seemed to have fled from the earth and the fiery spirits of demons to actuate men." 'Alā-ud-dīn, insatiable of revenge, carried away a number of the Sultan's adherents in chains to his native city, where they were slaughtered and the earth mixed with their blood was plastered on the walls. The Sultan himself died soon afterwards at Lahore, where he had taken refuge with the remnants of his army, but in 1186 Muhammad Ghūrī, or Shihab-ud-dīn, 'Alā-ud-dīn's cousin, captured the city, so that the last remnant of the Ghaznevide Empire, which included Kabul as well as the Panjab and part of Sind, passed into the possession of the Ghūri line.

The first of the Afghan Sultans, Shihab-ud-dīn Muhammad ibn Sām—to give him his full title—in accordance with court etiquette was provided with a pedigree going back to some apocryphal Persian kings. He acted for several years as commander-in-chief for his brother Ghiyās-ud-dīn, 'Alā-ud-dīn's successor, and in that capacity conducted his first Indian campaign. In 1191 he met with a disastrous defeat near Thanēshar from Prithivī-rāja, the Rāja of Delhi, and only escaped capture through the courage of a faithful servant who carried him off the field fainting from his wounds. The Afghan retired to his native stronghold, Ghūr, in a furious mood, and visited with his wrath some of his officers who returned with the remnants of his army by putting them in prison, having first compelled them to walk round the city with horses' nose-bags tied round their necks munching corn. Then as soon as he had recovered from his wounds he mustered a new army of 120,000 chosen Turki and Afghan horsemen and marched into India, determined to recover his lost honour from the infidels or die in the attempt.

Prithivī-rāja, who, with his brother-in-law Samarsi, Rāja of Chitor, and other great Rajput princes, prepared to meet the barbarian with equal resolution, was of the purest Rajput

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blood, being the chieftain of the Chauhan or Sessodia clansmen, who claimed descent from Rāma and the Sūryavamsa of Ajodhyā. By virtue of his military prowess and noble lineage Prithivī-rāja was recognised as the premier Rajput of Rājasthan. Ajmīr for a long time had been the Chauhan capital, but in the middle of the twelfth century one of Prithivī-rāja's ancestors had captured Delhi, one of the several cities which had risen and fallen, in successive ages, near the scene of the historic struggle between the Kauravas and Pāndavas. There had been a long-standing feud between the Gahāwār clan, whose chieftains then ruled at Kanauj, and the Chauhans of Delhi, accentuated by the elopement of Prithivī-rāja with a Gahāwār princess. This romantic incident,[1] which was quite in accordance with Kshatriya marriage traditions, was used by the Delhi court poet, Chand Bardāi, to explain the disasters which overtook the Rajput arms, for Prithivī-rāja's attachment to his bride is said to have caused a fatal delay in the preparations for meeting Shihāb-ud-dīn's attack. The Rāja of Kanauj, who lowered the standard of Rajput chivalry by employing Turki horsemen in his army,[2] is also said to have intrigued with the common enemy. There is no inherent improbability in the former statement, for in earlier times Hindu kings often had a bodyguard of Yavanas, or Asiatic Greeks, and, on the other hand, success in war brought many Hindu recruits to the armies of Islam. Ferishta states that a considerable body of Hindu cavalry, under the command of a Rajput

[1] Jaichand, the Rāja of Kanauj, had chosen one of the numerous suitors for his daughter's hand, but as a formality had arranged the traditional Kshatriya ceremony of *Swayamvara*, the bride's own choice. Prithivī-rāja, in spite of the deadly feud which existed between the two houses, received an invitation like the rest of the Rajput princes, but on account of the intentional arrogance of his letter Jaichand did not dream that the Chauhan would appear. In derision he put up a statue of him as the doorkeeper of the tournament. The princess, who was secretly in love with Prithivī-rāja, passed by all the throng of princes and threw the bridal garland over the neck of the statue. At the same moment the Chauhan Rāja with a few chosen retainers dashed into the arena, and in the confusion which ensued carried off the bride under the eyes of the infuriated father, in spite of the desperate efforts of the Kanauj warriors to prevent them.

[2] Tod, *Annals of Rajast'han*, vol. i, p. 256.

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chieftain, Siwand Rāi, served in the armies of Mahmūd of Ghazni.[1]

Though internal dissensions no doubt contributed to the final catastrophe, the immediate causes of the defeat of the Hindu forces were the resourcefulness of the Turkish leaders in countering the traditional tactics of Rajput warfare and the irresistible dash of the hardy Central Asian horsemen. When Shihāb-ud-dīn had reached Peshawar he was prevailed upon to order the release of the officers he had imprisoned and to make amends for the indignities he had inflicted on them by presenting them with robes of honour and reinstating them in the army. Then, following Mahmūd's usual practice, he spent some time at Multān in organising his forces, and finally advanced through the Panjab towards Delhi. Prithivī-rāja, joined by a number of Rajput princes, met the Musalman army near Thanēshar in the field where he had previously been victorious, but after a desperate conflict lasting from sunrise to sunset Shihāb-ud-dīn broke the Hindu ranks by a furious charge of his Turki horsemen, and the flower of Rajput chivalry perished in a vain attempt to retrieve the fortunes of the day. Prithivī-rāja himself was taken prisoner and put to death. Ajmīr, the Chauhan Rāja's ancestral city, fell into Shihāb-ud-dīn's hands and suffered the usual fate of pillage and massacre. Delhi resisted longer, but was captured the next year (1193) by Qutb-ud-dīn, one of Shihāb-ud-dīn's lieutenants, formerly a slave, who was installed in Ajmīr as governor.

A year later Shihāb-ud-dīn followed up his victories by the capture of Kanauj, after a pitched battle in which the Rāja Jaichand was killed by an arrow shot by Qutb-ud-dīn, who was an expert bowman. With the destruction of this famous fortress-city the way to the lower Ganges valley lay open. Benares was next plundered and burnt, and its thousand temples defiled and ruined by the ruthless barbarians in the name of the One True God. At the same time a body of horsemen sent by Qutb-ud-dīn, under the command of Muhammad ibn Bakhtiyar, sacked and burnt the monasteries of

[1] Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 94.

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Bihār, massacred the monks, and drove the rāja, Lakhsman Sen, from his capital at Nūdīah.

Shihāb-ud-dīn after the capture of Kanauj returned to Ghazni laden with spoil, where on his brother's death he was crowned as Sultan. He was assassinated in 1206, and from that time Qutb-ud-dīn, who was one of the Turkish slaves to whom the law of Islam gave unlimited opportunities as warlords, ruled as an independent sovereign at Delhi. He and his successors gradually extended their power over the plains of Āryāvarta, though the Rajput chieftains in their hill-fortresses continued heroically to defend themselves against overwhelming odds. Chitor held out until 1303, when 'Alā-ud-dīn threw all the strength of his empire against it. Then after a long siege, when further resistance was hopeless, all the Rajput women to save their honour threw themselves into a colossal funeral pyre lighted within the subterranean vaults of the palace, while the warriors clad in saffron robes of sacrifice rushed sword in hand against the serried ranks of the besiegers. The few who cut their way through found a refuge in the fastnesses of the Aravali hills. But Chitor did not remain permanently in the hands of the Musalman until it was captured by Akbar in 1568, and the Rajputs kept up a resistance until the last days of the Mogul Empire, though Akbar succeeded in winning some of the chieftains to his side. The part the latter played in the building up of that empire will be told later on.

The noble monuments such as the Qutb Minār and the old mosques at Delhi, the tomb of Altamsh and his mosque at Ajmīr, known as the Arhai-din-ka Jhomprā, when taken from their historical context and placed in a compartment by themselves as examples of the 'old Pathān style,' according to Fergusson's arbitrary classification, give a totally false impression of the character and culture of these Turkish or Pathān rulers and of the history of their times. Fergusson in his admiration for these monuments shut his eyes to the fact that they actually and positively represent a new link in the chain of Indo-Aryan culture which stretches from the remotest

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antiquity down to our own times, and only fortuitously and incidentally are related to the initiative of the Turkish freedmen for whose glorification they were designed and built by Hindu craftsmen. These Turkish or Pathān monarchs were no better and no worse than might be expected of men who, in a time when the doctrine of 'frightfulness' in war was preached and practised with such conspicuous success, rose by their own energy, determination, and courage from the lowest estate to the highest, and without any traditions of culture behind them were set to rule over great empires.

It is to their credit that they did not attempt to root out utterly the culture of the highly civilised Indo-Aryan races whom they ruled with a rod of iron. They used it to increase their own comfort and glory in much the same way as the parvenu millionaire of modern times surrounds himself with all the luxury and artistic treasures which money can provide. Naturally, by compelling Hindu craftsmen to conform to the law and ritual of Islam, they forced the traditions of Indo-Aryan art into new channels and thus unconsciously gave them a new impetus. But the personal note which they, and the ferocious rough-riders of Central Asia who formed their nobility, gave to Indian art was limited to one idea—they insisted that their buildings should be the biggest things on earth. This so-called 'Pathān' art was saved from the vulgarity of the modern plutocrat by the fact that the Turkish or Tartar tyrants had at their command an unlimited supply of the finest artistry of the world, at a time when its creative power was fully developed and had not been reduced to a mechanical formula by modern machinery and archaeological pedantry. The admiration which these great works justly excite should not prevent us from seeing that both in spirit and in substance their art is purely Indian and neither Turkish nor Pathān, and that their craftsmen were brothers of those who in the same epoch built the palaces of Chitor and the magnificent Towers of Victory with which the Rānas of Mewār commemorated the triumphs of Rajput chivalry.[1]

[1] Of the two Towers of Victory now existing at Chitor, the earliest belongs

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The archaeological method of writing history starts with the premiss that the Indian master-builders who created these noble monuments were so dull-witted and pedantic that they needed the inspiration of Turks, Pathāns, or Persians or Arabs to put a stone at an angle instead of horizontally when technical conditions made it expedient to do so. The pointed arches built in this fashion and ornamented with texts from the Qurān instead of idolatrous Hindu symbols are therefore taken as incontestable evidence of the architectural genius of Islam. The proselytising swordsmen of the Prophet would have scorned to claim the merit which modern dilettanti thrust upon them. Their interests were in the battlefield, in the chase, and in an adventurous open-air life. The glory of Islam demanded that its militant apostles should appropriate to themselves all the symbols of earthly power and the comforts which it brought them. But they left the arts of peace—except that of the scribe, which was necessary for the right interpretation of the law of Islam—to the infidel. Saracenic culture was therefore purely literary. No Turk or Tartar or Mongol once enlisted under the banner of Islam would deign to plough the field or glorify God by the peaceful labour of his hands. The way to riches and to Paradise lay in spoiling the infidel and dying on the battlefield. Saracenic craftsmanship was the culture of the races which were forced under the Musalman yoke. Such terms as Saracenic or Pathān applied to Indo-Muhammadan architecture are historically unscientific because of the implication that the creative impulse came from outside India; whereas, except for some of the decorative motives where the influence of the foreign Musalman scribe and painter can be seen, Indo-Muhammadan architecture is purely Indian. Hindu builders joined the ranks of the 'true believer' to escape the poll-tax and the social stigma from which they suffered as Hindus; but their foreign rulers left them to work out their own ideas of planning and

to the eleventh or twelfth century, and the later one, which may rank as one of the finest towers in the world, to the reign of Kumbha Rāna, 1428–1468.

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of structure, provided they did not offend against the law of Islam.[1]

It would be outside the scope of this work to give a complete account of the successive conquests of the early Musalman dynasties and of their provincial governors, who were always fighting for their own hand, and one after another set themselves up as independent rulers in Āryāvarta. So long as these Turkish or Pathān Sultans and their deputies revelled in an adventurous open-air life which involved strenuous physical exercise and some mental exertion, their despotic rule was characterised by a certain primitive sense of honour and justice which is extravagantly extolled by Muhammadan writers. But though some of these slave kings had qualities which made them admirable tribal chieftains, none had the culture or the moral stamina to qualify them as rulers of a highly civilised race with a religion different from their own. Many of them were despots of the worst type, who relapsed into hopeless debauchery and cruelty. The system which put political power into the hands of the slaves who formed the imperial body-guard left the succession to the throne always insecure, made the court a hotbed of intrigue, and favoured the grossest corruption and tyranny in the administration. Some of the Sultans won a vicarious fame as patrons of great poets, Persian or Indian, but these dilettanti monarchs very rarely had great intellectual gifts of their own such as distinguished the highly cultured Aryan dynasties of India.

The Turk as a shepherd in his native pastures had a reputation for stupidity of which he was extremely sensitive when conversion to Islam made him a military aristocrat and an irresponsible ruler. Some tried to remove the reproach by establishing a fictitious Persian pedigree and by bestowing patronage upon Persian or Indian poets, but, except in the eyes of their own courtiers, the Turki sovereigns of India were neither statesmen, scholars, nor artists. The Pathāns, who claimed

[1] The evolution of Indo-Muhammadan architecture is explained more fully in the author's *Indian Architecture: its Psychology, Structure, and History* (Murray, 1913).

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Jewish ancestry, lacked the essential quality of a ruling race—capacity for self-government. They despised handicrafts and any occupation except agriculture and warfare. Fergusson's comment on the screen of Qutb-ud-dīn's mosque at Delhi, that "the Afghan conquerors had a tolerably distinct idea that pointed arches were the true form for architectural openings," is hopelessly wide of the mark, whether applied to Turks or Pathāns.

In the administration of their vast Indian territories these early Muhammadan Sultans found it expedient to utilise for the benefit of Islam the ancient Indo-Aryan administrative machinery, though the ethical and religious principles upon which it was based were entirely foreign to their minds. Even under the best conditions the application of Indo-Aryan methods of government by Turkish or Pathān rulers led to grave abuses. The village communities, deprived of their traditional rights as owners of the soil, were at the mercy of the Sultan's Musalman officials, or of low Brahman agents appointed to collect the imperial revenue, who were not always above the temptation of extorting money from their own people, while they would naturally regard it as a pious duty to deceive their Mlechchha employers.

The assessment of taxes due to the imperial treasury, which formerly had been regulated by traditional law and custom, was now fixed arbitrarily by the caprice of a despotic ruler and his unscrupulous officers, for whom infidels only existed that they might minister to the needs of the faithful. The crowds of foreign adventurers who thronged the imperial and provincial capitals were supported solely by grants of land or allowances from the imperial treasury, while they contributed nothing by their industry or science to the general welfare of the State. The endowment of learning and piety which under Hindu rule had been bestowed impartially upon all recognised religious sects, either at the free will of the popular assemblies or from the sovereign's personal estate, was now limited to the propagation of the teaching of Islam at the expense of the whole community, while all forms of religious belief outside

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Islamic dogma were penalised by heavy exactions and limitless means of oppression.

The chief events in the history of the Muhammadan conquest of Northern India by Qutb-ud-dīn and his immediate successors may be briefly summarised. Qutb-ud-dīn's victories and Muhammad ibn Bakhtiyar's occupation of Bihar and Bengal practically made two Musalman kingdoms, one having its capital at Delhi and the other at Lakhnauti or Gaur, though the province of Gaur generally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Delhi Sultan. Ibn Bakhtiyar attempted to add Tibet and Kāmarūpa, the modern province of Assam, to his conquests, but meeting with stronger opposition than he expected he turned back, only to find his retreat cut off by the Rāja of Kāmarūpa's troops. His force was nearly annihilated, and he himself narrowly escaped with his life. Defeat to these fire-eating swashbucklers was worse than a crime. He died of grief shortly afterwards, and none of his successors ever attempted to repeat his hazardous enterprise.

Altamsh, Qutb-ud-dīn's son-in-law and successor, in 1231 captured the fortress of Gwalior, and soon afterwards the capital of Mālwā, the famous city of Ujjain, destroying a great temple, dedicated to Mahākālī, which rivalled Somnāth in magnificence. In 1310 the whole province fell into Musalman hands, and was ruled by governors appointed from Delhi until the beginning of the fifteenth century, when it became an independent Musalman state with its capital at Mandu. Altamsh's son and successor, Rukn-ud-dīn, was a debauchee, and soon made way for his capable sister, the Sultana Razia Begam, who had frequently acted as regent in her father's lifetime, and possessed many of the qualities of a good Musalman, including that of reading the Qurān with correct pronunciation.[1] She, however, offended the Turki faction at her court by her intimacy with an Abyssinian slave whom she made commander-in-chief, and after a short reign she was put to death by her brother Bairām in 1239.

At the close of the thirteenth century Qutb-ud-dīn's dynasty

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. ii, p. 217.

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was brought to an end by the weakness and debauchery of Kai-Kubād M'uizz-ud-dīn. One of his generals, Jalāl-ud-dīn, the leader of the Khilji clan, having disposed of his dying master, seized the throne in 1288, but after a reign of seven years was himself treacherously murdered by his nephew 'Alā-ud-dīn, the second of the Khilji dynasty. The Khiljis were Turks, like their predecessors, but of a different tribe. 'Alā-ud-dīn's chief exploit was a daring raid which he undertook on his own responsibility during his uncle's reign. Up to this time the Musalman conquests had been confined to Āryāvarta, or Hindustan proper—the land lying north of the Vindhya range. The Indo-Aryan kingdoms of the Dekhan and Southern India had been fully occupied with their own quarrels, and, being accustomed for many centuries to consider themselves as having no part in the political affairs of Northern India, had looked on unconcerned while the armies of Islam plundered and ravaged the holy places of Āryāvarta.

'Alā-ud-dīn, young and adventurous, longed to explore the country as yet unkonwn to the Musalman marauders, which promised richer spoil than he had yet obtained from the impoverished infidels near at hand. Jalāl-ud-dīn was fond of his impetuous nephew and had made him governor of the province of Oudh. The position by no means satisfied 'Alā-ud-dīn's thirst for adventure, so having heard of a flourishing city named Deoghur (the modern Daulatābād), then the capital of Mahārāshtra, lying seven hundred miles to the south, he left his headquarters at Karra with a body of eight thousand horse and, spreading abroad the rumour that he had quarrelled with the Sultan of Delhi and was about to take service with a rāja in the south, he marched through Bundēlkhand unopposed, drawing supplies from the prosperous Hindu villages through which he passed. He then pushed on through Mālwā, using alternately the Delhi Sultan's prestige and the plausible tale of his quarrel with him to secure support from the Musalman authorities and to disarm the suspicion of the Hindu. When at last, having crossed the Vindhyas and the Narbadā river, 'Alā-ud-dīn appeared before Deoghur, the Rāja Rām Dēva

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was totally unprepared to meet his attack, for no Musalman army had yet penetrated so far. The city was plundered of all its wealth, and the Rāja, who had retired to his adjoining hill-fortress, was glad to save himself from a dangerous position by a heavy payment of gold and jewels and the promise of a yearly tribute to the Sultan.

When 'Alā-ud-dīn got safely back to Karra after a year's absence, with numerous elephants and an immense booty, there was great rejoicing at the Delhi court at the prospect of a splendid contribution to the imperial treasury, for "the guileless heart of the Sultan" relied on the fidelity of his nephew. He was soon undeceived, for 'Alā-ud-dīn had not the least intention of parting with his plunder. When the unsuspecting Sultan came to take over the spoil, he was cut down by followers of 'Alā-ud-dīn while the latter was pretending to do him homage. The imperial canopy was immediately brought and raised over the chief assassin's head, and 'Alā-ud-dīn's succession to the throne of Delhi was made secure by the murder of Jalāl-ud-dīn's two sons and some of his partisans, and by the lavish distribution of largesse from the imperial treasury.[1]

The atrocities which 'Alā-ud-dīn perpetrated as Sultan even surpassed his villainous conduct as a subject. Yet he was altogether a very interesting historical figure, and in his reign of twenty years there are many parallels with the events of our own time. His ideals were those of a Prussian war-lord. "I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful," he answered to the arguments of the learned doctors of Islam; "whatever I think to be for the good of the State, or suitable for the emergency, that I decree."[2] This new religion and *Kultur*, upon which he invoked the blessings of God and of His Prophet in proper form, he would bring all men to adopt by his sword and by the mighty war-machine which he contrived. All statesmanship was summed up in the efficiency of the war-machine, and in the subordination of all other human interests to its perfection. His methods of promoting it were

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot's *History of India*, vol. iii, p. 151.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

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drastic and thoroughly scientific. The whole of his subjects, Musalman as well as Hindu, were to be disciplined into implicit obedience as a means of promoting perfect discipline in the army. The first steps were to bring back under imperial control all proprietary rights, free gifts, and religious endowments granted by his predecessors. All pensions, grants of land, and endowments in the country were appropriated—"the people were pressed and amerced, money was exacted from them on every kind of pretence."[1] No one could stir without the Sultan's knowledge, and "whatever happened in the houses of nobles, great men, and officials was communicated to the Sultan by his reporters. Nor were the reports neglected, for explanations of them were demanded. The system of reporting went to such a length that nobles dared not speak aloud even in the largest palaces, and if they had anything to say they communicated by signs."[2]

The Sultan next, in consultation with the learned professors of his court, devised rules and regulations "for grinding down the Hindus and for depriving them of that wealth and property which fosters disaffection and rebellion."[3] Sharaf Kāi, "an accomplished scribe and a most honest and intelligent man, who had no rival either in capacity or integrity," was the Sultan's chief agent in enforcing the regulations, which were so effective that "one revenue officer would string twenty *khūts*, *mukaddins*, or *chaudharis* together by the neck and enforce payment by blows."[4]

'Alā-ud-dīn had a short way with those who failed to follow the principles of his *Kultur* implicitly. Being informed that some of the chiefs of the 'New Musalmans' or Moguls he had enlisted in his army were disaffected and plotting revolt, he determined that "the whole of that race settled in his territories should be exterminated" and that "not one of the stock should be left alive upon the face of the earth." Between 20,000 and 30,000 of them were accordingly massacred, "of

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 179.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 179–180.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 182.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

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whom probably only a few had any knowledge [of the intended revolt]."[1] "After these punishments," adds the Musalman historian, "breaches of the peace were never heard of in the city."

'Alā-ud-dīn, with a self-denial rare in a despot of his type, even put a check upon his own vices. Finding that his drinking habits impaired his efficiency as a war-lord, he gave up wine-parties entirely, prohibited wine-drinking and wine-selling, and the use of beer and intoxicating drugs. He ordered that the china and glass vessels of his banqueting-hall should be broken: "Jars and casks of wine were brought out of the royal cellars and emptied at the Badāūn Gate in such abundance that mud and mire were produced as in the rainy season."[2] Holes for the incarceration of wine-bibbers were dug outside the gate, and the severity of the punishment was such that many of them died. "The terrors of these holes deterred many from drinking." He gave minute attention to the organisation and equipment of his army; he attended carefully to the upkeep of his lines of communication, establishing posts along the roads with relays of horses, from whence regular reports of the progress of the army were sent to headquarters. To prevent false news being circulated among the troops or in the city, reports of the Sultan's health were constantly circulated by the same agency.[3]

But the most remarkable of his achievements were the economic measures by which he provided for a large increase of the effective strength of the army when a formidable invasion of Moguls threatened his capital. As the resources of the imperial treasury would not provide for the necessary augmentation without reducing the current rates of pay, he was advised by his counsellors that the only alternative was to devise regulations and tariffs so that the price of grain and other provisions might be brought down to a lower level. In that way, they observed, a large army might be maintained at a comparatively small expense.

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 206.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 180. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

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'Alā-ud-dīn's organising capacity was equal to the occasion. He first appointed a wise and practical man, Malik Kabul Ulugh Khan, as chief controller of the markets, gave him a high remuneration and a strong military escort, and placed under him an expert staff of officials assisted by intelligent spies. Then the Sultan replenished the State granaries by ordering that the tribute from a fixed number of villages should be paid in kind.[1] "By these means so much royal grain came to Delhi that there never was a time when there were not two or three royal granaries full of grain in the city. When there was a deficiency of rain, or when for any reason the caravans did not arrive and grain became scarce in the markets, then the royal stores were opened and the corn was sold at the tariff price, according to the wants of the people." [2]

The Malik's first proceeding was to arrest all the principal grain-dealers and carriers, forcing them to give security for each other, and detaining them until they had agreed upon a common mode of action, *i.e.*, a low fixed tariff. Then they with their families, beasts of burden, and cattle were given fixed locations in the villages along the banks of the Jumna and placed under the supervision of overseers whose orders they were compelled to obey. The provincial revenue officers and their assistants were instructed that the ryots should be compelled to sell their standing corn to the grain-dealers at the standard price, but they were allowed to earn the grain-carriers' profit by bringing their corn to the market and selling it at the tariff rate. Stringent regulations were made to prevent either merchants or ryots from concealing or holding back their grain. The Sultan himself kept a firm grip upon the whole organisation. He received daily reports of the market rate and transactions from three different sources, and any deviations from the rules were severely punished.

The success of the scheme was "the wonder of the age." Even in years when the rains were deficient there was

[1] This had been the usual custom before the Muhammadan invasions, but evidently the Musalman had insisted on the taxes being paid in coin.

[2] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 193.

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no scarcity of corn in Delhi, and no rise in the price. "Once or twice when the rains were deficient a market-overseer reported that the price had risen half a *jital*, and he received twenty blows with the stick. When the rains failed, a quantity of corn, sufficient for the daily supply of each quarter of the city, was consigned to the dealers every day from the market, and half a *man* used to be allowed to the ordinary purchasers in the markets. Thus the gentry and traders, who had no villages or lands, used to get grain from the markets. If in such a season any poor reduced person went to the market and did not get assistance, the overseer received his punishment whenever the fact found its way to the King's ears." [1]

Similar arrangements were made for maintaining a maximum price for clothing, fruit, vegetables, and other provisions, slaves, horses, and cattle. It should be observed that the regulation of prices and famine-preventive measures had been a recognised branch of traditional Hindu polity, though the principles on which they were based were different. 'Alā-ud-dīn's methods of punishment for dealers who gave short weight were characteristic. The official inspector took from the offender's shop the quantity which was deficient and then cut off from the latter's haunches an equal weight of flesh. The 'Kultural' effect was that the traders were kept honest and "gave such good weight that purchasers often got somewhat in excess."

The virtue of 'Alā-ud-dīn's *Kultur* was proved by the fact that through these economic measures he raised the strength of his cavalry to 475,000; his military organisation was made thoroughly efficient, and the arms of Islam everywhere triumphed both over the Hindus and the Moguls. He emulated the barbarity of the latter by bringing thousands of them as prisoners to Delhi, where they were cast under the feet of elephants, and suitable reprisals were taken against the barbarians by piling up their heads in pyramids and building them into towers.[2]

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 195.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

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Early in his reign 'Alā-ud-dīn set about the conquests by which he hoped to become a second Alexander.[1] In 1297 he sent an expedition to reconquer Gujerat, which had been tributary to Qutb-ud-dīn, but had recovered its independence. This being successfully accomplished he laid siege to the hill-fortress of Rantambhōr, as a preliminary to the conquest of Rājputāna. The place was stoutly defended for a whole year by Hamīr Dēva, a descendant of the Rāja Prithivī-rāja of Delhi, assisted by some Mogul troops who had taken refuge there, but it was finally carried by assault and the whole garrison put to the sword. Chitor, which had been recovered by the Rajputs, again fell after a siege of many months, and again the Rajput women saved their honour by throwing themselves into the sacrificial fire, while a devoted band of warriors cut their way through the besiegers and rallied in their native fastnesses. The Rāna himself was made prisoner, but escaped in the following year. 'Alā-ud-dīn contented himself with handing over Chitor to a representative of the Rāna of Mewār's family, who remained as a tributary to Delhi for some years, until he was driven out by Hamīr. The famous Rajput stronghold thereafter kept the banner of the Sūrya-vamsa proudly flying in the midst of its Musalman enemies, until it was taken by Akbar and his Rajput allies.

In the meantime 'Alā-ud-dīn had proved the efficiency of his war-machine, not only by repelling several formidable invasions of the Mogul hordes, which were then overrunning Europe and Asia, and by suppressing dangerous conspiracies among his own followers, but by carrying on a successful campaign in the Dekhan under the command of his general Malik Kafur. The latter was a Hindu slave taken in the conquest of Gujerat, who had embraced Islam, and being attached to the imperial bodyguard had speedily risen to a high position at the court, much to the disgust of 'Alā-ud-dīn's Turki and Afghan retainers. Malik Kafur marched to Deoghur, the scene of 'Alā-ud-dīn's early exploits, and forced the Rāja Rām Dēva to do homage to

[1] According to Ferishta the title of 'Alexander the Second' was struck upon the coins of the Empire.

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the Sultan; then, using that place as a base, he eventually swept through the Dekhan and Southern India. In the course of several campaigns he captured Warangal, then the capital of the Telinga country, Madura, the ancient capital of the Pāndyas, and Halebīd, where the powerful rājas of the Hoysala Ballāla line then ruled over the territory now comprised in the Mysore state, and part of the Kanarese country. The spoils gathered from these rich southern kingdoms were prodigious. When Malik Kafur returned to Delhi in 1311 with the Hoysala rāja as his captive, he brought back, it is said, 612 elephants, 96,000 mans of gold, several boxes of priceless jewels and pearls, and 20,000 horses. The oldest inhabitant declared that so much gold and so many elephants had never before been brought to Delhi, and the hearts of the faithful were made glad by the lavish gifts distributed by the Sulṭan.[1]

Before his death in 1316 'Alā-ud-dīn was suzerain not only of the Musalman kingdom of Gaur, but of the greater part of Hindu India. Though in his own person he represented the uncompromising barbarity of the Turkish despot, his policy and conduct assisted to some extent the process of evolution by which the typical Indian Muslim came to regard India as his spiritual home, and to make Islam in India the highest expression of a great world-religion. The process had already begun when the doctors of Islam under Harūn-al-Raschid began to expand the primitive doctrine of Islam by the study of Indian religious thought. It was continued when the Arabs gained a firm footing in Āryāvarta, and again when Mahmūd of Ghazni filled the harems of the Musalman world with Indian women and sent thousands of Indian craftsmen forth to make their religion serve the material as well as the spiritual needs of Islam in Western Asia. The Indian craftsman was always a religious teacher, and the foundations of his belief were not shaken when he took a Muslim name and invoked the Deity as Allah instead of Ishvara. The final conquest of Hindustan brought the baser elements of Islam into close contact with

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 204.

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Indian civilisation. But even while India lay prostrate and bleeding under the oppressor's foot, the Indian ideal was slowly permeating the social and spiritual life of the Muhammadan conquerors, and Islam was adjusting its dogmas to the Indian religious synthesis.

Indian women were prized above all others in the Muslim slave-market on account of their beauty and graceful manners.[1] 'Alā-ud-dīn himself was captivated by a Rajput princess, Kāula Devi, the wife of the Rāja of Gujerat, "who for beauty, wit, and accomplishments was the flower of India."[2] He took her into his harem, and his attachment to her gave a touch of romance to the annals of his reign. Kāula Devi had two daughters by her Hindu husband, one of whom had died; the surviving one, Dēwal Devi, remained in the house of her exiled father after her mother had been captured by 'Alā-ud-dīn's general and taken into the imperial harem. Kāula Dēvi's chief desire, when the news reached her at Delhi that her daughter was alive, was to obtain possession of her. 'Alā-ud-dīn gave orders, through the governor of Gujerat, that the young princess must be sent to Delhi forthwith. The governor at first tried to persuade the Rāja, Karan Rāi, to surrender his daughter by promises and threats; but failing in these marched his army against him. The Rāja was defeated and obliged to fly. Dēwal Devi had been sent off previously with an escort to be wedded to the Rāja of Deoghur; but the bridal party was intercepted by a party of Musalman horsemen in the neighbourhood of Ellora, and Dēwal Devi was thus restored to her mother at Delhi. Soon afterwards the Sultan's eldest son, Khizr Khan, fell violently in love with her, and 'Alā-ud-dīn would have consented to the match but for the opposition of Khizr Khan's Afghan mother, who wished him to marry the daughter of her brother, Alp Khan, governor of Gujerat. Eventually, after many romantic adventures, which were sung by the court poet, Amīr Khusru, a compromise was made and Dēwal Devi became Khizr Khan's second wife.

[1] Extract from *Travels* of Shahāb-ud-dīn Abul Abbas Ahmad, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 581.

[2] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 329.

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DEATH OF 'ALA-UD-DIN

'Alā-ud-dīn had many wives, and the impartiality with which he chose them made his court a hot-bed of intrigues between the Rajput, Turki, and Afghan factions. Towards the end of his reign, when his health was impaired by intemperance, he was no longer able to keep a firm grip on the reins of government. Revolts broke out in Gujerat and in the Dekhan, the Rajputs recovered Chitor, and 'Alā-ud-dīn's death was the signal for the usual murderous scramble for power, in which his Indian general, Malik Kafur, the conqueror of the Dekhan, took the leading part. He succeeded in putting out the eyes of 'Alā-ud-dīn's two eldest sons, and would have done the same with the third, Mubārik Khan, if assassins had not put a stop to his crimes.

Mubārik Khan, the last of the Khilji line, then ascended the throne of Delhi in 1317, and immediately gave way to unbridled excesses. "He became infamous," says Ferishta, "for every vice that can disgrace human nature, and condescended so far as to dress himself often like a common actress and go with the public women to dance at the houses of the nobility." The next upstart who was enabled by the social philosophy of Islam to hack his way to a throne was a Hindu pariah who found favour with Mubārik and then murdered him. He rallied round him the lowest rabble of Delhi, both Musalman and Hindu, and for five months the city was a pandemonium. When at last the contending factions had settled with each other the Khilji line was found to be exterminated, and in 1321 Ghiyās-ud-dīn, the first of the Tughlak dynasty, became Sultan under the name of Tughlak Shah.

The new Sultan was of Turkish or Tartar race on his father's side, but his mother was an Indian Jāt. Finding the political atmosphere of Delhi unhealthy, he built himself a citadel about four miles away to the east—the grim fortress to which he gave the name of Tughlakābād. With equal prudence he strengthened the defences of the north-west frontier to keep back the Mogul hordes, always waiting for an opportunity to swoop down into the Indus valley and spoil the spoilers of Hindustan. The rest of his five years' reign

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he was occupied in suppressing revolts of his Hindu tributaries in the Dekhan and Mahārāshtra, and in bringing Gaur back to its allegiance to the Delhi Sultanate.

Tughlak Shah met with his death by the collapse of a wooden pavilion which had been raised for his reception on his return from a successful expedition to Tirhut. The mystery of the 'accident' was never cleared up, but as this was one of the methods of getting rid of an enemy recognised by Indian diplomacy, there is good reason to suspect foul play. Muhammad Tughlak, his eldest son, enjoyed the unusual luxury of a peaceful accession. "On this occasion the streets of the city [of Delhi] were strewed with flowers; the houses adorned; drums beaten; and every demonstration of joy was exhibited. The new monarch ordered some elephants laden with gold and silver to precede and follow the procession, from which money was scattered among the populace."[1]

Muhammad had all the accomplishments of the Turkish dilettante which in later times distinguished the Great Moguls, but he was hopelessly incapable as a statesman and ruler of men. He excelled in Persian and Arabic calligraphy. He had studied Greek philosophy, and resumed the traditions of Indo-Aryan courts by debating metaphysical problems with the learned doctors of Islam and by bestowing a liberal patronage upon men of letters. He took interest in astronomy, mathematics, and the physical sciences. He established hospitals and almshouses for widows and orphans. Ferishta also states that he sometimes went so far as to attend on sick persons whose symptoms excited his curiosity, but in such legends of court life a liberal allowance must be made for courtly fantasy. He observed all the outward professions of a good Musalman, was regular in his daily prayers, and abstained from drunkenness and other vices condemned by the Prophet.

His conscience was not satisfied by purging the court of the shameless debauchery which had disgraced the name of Islam. He sought to repair the errors of his predecessors, who for several centuries had totally ignored the temporal supremacy

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 409.

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of the Khalif. To secure the pontifical blessing he sent an embassy with rich presents to Egypt and caused the Khalif's name to be struck on the imperial coinage and to be substituted for his own in public worship in the mosques. When his ambassador returned from Egypt with the Khalif's envoy bearing the letter which confirmed his own authority as Sultan, Muhammad advanced in person with all humility to receive it, put the letter on his head, and opened it with great solemnity and respect.[1] A grand festival was ordered in the envoy's honour, and Muhammad gave orders that every Sultan's name which had not received the Khalif's confirmation should be omitted in the reading of the *Khutba* in the mosques.

In striking contrast to his religious professions was Muhammad's conduct as a ruler. "He was," says his biographer and co-religionist, "wholly devoid of mercy or consideration for his people. So little did he hesitate to spill the blood of God's creatures, that when anything occurred which excited him to proceed to that horrid extremity, one might have supposed his object was to exterminate the human species altogether." He suffered from megalomania to such an extent that his actions often laid him open to the suspicion of mental derangement—as when he ordered one of his own teeth to be buried with much ceremony, and caused a magnificent monument to be raised over it.[2] He surpassed 'Alā-ud-dīn in the grandeur of his schemes of world-conquest, but totally lacked the great Khilji Sultan's military genius and capacity for organisation. Disregarding the remonstrances of his military advisers, he launched an army of 100,000 men on a wild project of conquering China, and put to death the few who returned to tell the tale of their disasters. On the other hand, when an army of Moguls under Timūr Shīn Khan invaded the Panjab and threatened Delhi, he could only meet the situation by the feeble device of buying off the enemy with large presents of

[1] Ferishta, vol. i, p. 426.

[2] Ferishta, however, does not observe that this proceeding might have been in derision of the Buddhist practice of building stūpas over the bodily relics of their Master.

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gold and jewels. His ruthless cruelty and senseless exactions roused both his own provincial governors and his Hindu feudatories to rebellion: he revenged himself by having his own nephew flayed alive, and by organising raids on a large scale by which whole districts were depopulated.

Among the grandiose schemes of Muhammad's disordered brain was the removal of his capital from Delhi to Deoghur. Though the distance between the two places is considerable, such a resolve would not have been inconsistent with Indian monarchical traditions had not the Sultan also resolved to celebrate the event by ordering that the whole population of Delhi, men, women, and children, with all their movable property, should accompany him. The poor were to be provided with money and food for the journey, and even trees were to be planted along the roads to give a fictitious splendour to the grand procession, but not a cat or a dog was to be left in Delhi. No one dared to disobey, but many died on the road, and of those who reached Deoghur many were exposed to terrible privations from lack of means of subsistence. Muhammad tried to appease the discontent of his soldiers by laying out the new capital, which he called Daulatābād, on a magnificent scale; but two years afterwards he was constrained to return to Delhi, and again his unfortunate subjects were made the victims of his caprice. The effect of this was noticed by Ibn Batuta, the traveller, who visited India and took service for a time under Muhammad Tughlak at Delhi. The city was the greatest and most magnificent in the world, he said, but it had the fewest inhabitants.[1]

When the imperial treasury had been exhausted by his boundless extravagance another brilliant idea entered the head of this hare-brained autocrat. He had heard that in China there was a paper currency, the notes used instead of coin being stamped with the Emperor's seal and made payable at the imperial treasury. Muhammad Tughlak thought it a better plan to issue copper coins as counters and by an imperial decree to make them pass at the value of gold and silver. This was

[1] Elliot's *History of India*, vol. iii, p. 585.

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an opportunity of which the Hindu metal-workers promptly took advantage. Every village became an open mint, and the whole population joined in the game of defrauding the imperial treasury. For a time the Sultan's credit was good enough and the golden days of Āryāvarta seemed to have returned. The people gladly paid their tribute in copper instead of gold, and they bought all the necessaries and luxuries they desired in the same coin. But the prudent merchants bought in copper and sold in gold. The Sultan's tokens were not accepted in countries in which his decrees did not run. Soon the whole external trade of Hindustan came to a standstill. When at last "the copper *tankas* had become more worthless than clods," the Sultan in a rage repealed his edict and proclaimed that the treasury would exchange gold coins for his copper ones.

The effect of this decree may be imagined. "Thousands of men from various quarters who possessed thousands of these copper coins and caring nothing for them . . . now brought them to the treasury and received in exchange gold *tankas* and silver *tankas*. . . . So many of these copper *tankas* were brought to the treasury that heaps of them rose up in Tughlakābād like mountains."[1] Muhammad was obliged to close his treasury. The sharp-witted merchants had made fortunes, but thousands were ruined, and the Sultan vented his wrath upon his unfortunate subjects by devising fresh means of pitiless extortion.

Hindustan was reduced to the same plight as Armenia in the worst days of Turkish misrule. The ryots in the fertile tract between the Ganges and the Jumna set fire to their houses in despair and retired to the forests with their families and cattle, eking out a precarious existence by brigandage. Whole provinces were desolated by famine, populous towns were deserted. Thousands sought refuge in Bengal (Gaur), which had thrown off its allegiance, or placed themselves beyond the reach of the Delhi tyrant in other provinces. Even the Sultan's household at times was inconvenienced by the general distress, so that Muhammad's heart "seemed for once to be softened

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, pp. 240–241.

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by the miseries of his subjects." He directed that large sums should be distributed for the encouragement of husbandry and commerce. The recipients of his bounty, however, were so distressed that they spent the money on the purchase of the necessaries of life, and many of them were severely punished on that account.

Towards the end of his reign, following the usual practice of his predecessors, he drove the best of his Musalman officers to revolt by conferring high rank upon men of the meanest birth and vilest character, who were only too willing to be made instruments of his wickedness. Some of the feudatory Hindu princes joined in the revolt. Muhammad Tughlak escaped the fate which overtook so many other of the Delhi Sultans by dying of a fever in 1350 after a reign of twenty-five years.

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CHAPTER III

FIRUZ SHAH

FIRUZ SHAH, Muhammad Tughlak's nephew and successor, is perhaps not unduly praised in Muhammadan chronicles as a wise and humane ruler, according to the ethics of Islam. His reign is a welcome break in the long chain of tyranny, cruelty, and debauch which makes up the gloomy annals of the Turki dynasties. His Musalman biographers naturally attribute his virtues as a man and as a ruler to his devotion to the teaching of Islam, and do not attempt to penetrate deeper into the psychology of Indo-Muhammadan history. But one of them, Shams-i-Sīraj 'Alif, who was a contemporary of Firuz Shah, and in high favour at his court, gives us a clue left unnoticed by Anglo-Indian writers who have followed Fergusson's lead in treating Islamic culture in India as a foreign importation.

Firuz Shah's mother was a Rajputni, one of the beautiful and accomplished daughters of the Rāna Mall Bhatti. His father, Sipah Sālār Rājab, was a younger brother of the first Tughlak Sultan, Ghiyās-ud-dīn, who acted as Governor of Dipālpūr during the reign of 'Alā-ud-dīn. Every young Turki noble in those days, by fair means or foul, filled his harem with high-born Indian women, and the Governor of Dipālpūr when he was seeking a suitable match for his brother heard the praises of Bībī Nāila, Rāna Mall's beautiful daughter. He accordingly sent "intelligent and acute" messengers to the father with a proposal of marriage on his brother's behalf. The Rajput chief indignantly rejected the offer, with language which was "unseemly and improper." The Governor, after debating long upon the next course to take, proceeded to Rāna Mall's villages and demanded immediate payment in cash of

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the whole year's taxes. "The mukaddins and chaudharis were subjected to coercion and payment in full was insisted upon."

In the days of 'Alā-ud-dīn, observes the Musalman historian, the protests of Hindu landowners were unavailing and no one dared to make any outcry. The exact methods of coercion adopted by the Governor's agents are not particularised, but in the course of two or three days, we are told, the Hindus "were reduced to extremities and suffered much hardship."

Reports of the people's distress soon reached the ears of the Rāna's aged mother. Knowing well the object of the Governor's proceedings, she went to her son's house at the time of evening prayer, "weeping and tearing her hair, and spoke most feelingly upon the matter." Bībī Nāila happened to be in the courtyard and anxiously inquired the cause of her grandmother's grief. "I am weeping for you, Nāila," replied the venerable lady, "for it is on your account that Tughlak Shah oppresses the people of this land." The high-spirited girl dried her grandmother's tears. "If my surrender," she exclaimed, "will deliver our people from such misery, send me to him at once: only say that the Moguls have carried off one of your daughters." The proud Rāna was moved by his heroic daughter's self-sacrifice, and at last gave his assent to the marriage. Messengers were sent to the Governor to announce the fact. Bībī Nāila was brought to Dipālpūr, and as the bride of Sipah Sālār became known by the name of the Sultāna Bībī Kadbānū.[1]

We hear nothing of the life of the devoted Rajput lady in the seclusion of the harem, except that she was left a widow seven years after the birth of her only child, Firuz Shah, and that Tughlak Shah was kind to his brother's wife and treated the child as his own. Tughlak Shah became Sultan when Firuz was a youth, and the latter accompanied his uncle during four and a half years of his reign on his State tours. Muhammad Shah, it is said, was exceedingly kind and generous to him, and instructed him in affairs of State. For

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, pp. 272–273.

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some years before he came to the throne he served as a provincial governor. Firuz Shah's courtly historian, quietly ignoring the black record of Muhammad Shah's reign, attributes his capacity as a ruler to the training he received from his two uncles, but reveals the whole truth by the glimpse he gives us of the Sultāna Bībī Kadbānū's early life. The blood of Indo-Aryan royalty ran in the veins of Firuz Shah, and it was at his Rajput mother's knee that he learnt the lesson of *noblesse oblige* and the great traditions of Aryan polity which guided him in after-life.

Firuz Shah's uncles, nevertheless, took good care that in his religious instruction he should be brought up according to the strictest canons of Islam and with an inveterate intolerance of the popular forms of Hindu ritual. He was as zealous an iconoclast as Mahmūd of Ghazni, and like a good Sunni forbade the painting of portraits in the royal palaces. He reimposed the *jizya*, or poll-tax, upon Brahmans, who had been exempt from it in former reigns, declaring that they were "the very keys of the chamber of idolatry" and ought to be taxed first. An old Brahman, charged with idol-worship and with the perversion of Muhammadan women, having refused to accept Islam, was burned alive in front of the Sultan's palace, together with the wooden tablets "covered with paintings of demons and other objects" which were the damning proof of his heresy.

Firuz Shah apparently constituted himself a Grand Inquisitor both of Musalmans and Hindus. He burned the books of the Shiahs, suppressed the propaganda they were making, and put to death a Musalman fanatic who claimed divine inspiration as a prophet and "led people astray with mystic practices." He was equally severe with Hindus of the Sāktā sect, who worshipped the creative principle with obscene rites. He forbade the persecution of Hinduism in general, but "destroyed their idol temples and instead thereof built mosques."

Though Firuz Shah seems to have been a pious and zealous Musalman it is not quite clear whether he acted thus entirely from conscientious motives. Probably he tried to placate the

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fanatical Sunni faction at court by giving them a free hand in religious matters. Certain incidents of his reign warrant the belief that he lacked strength of character and often allowed his better judgment to be overruled by the learned doctors of the law and the powerful nobles whose support secured his succession to the throne. He was by no means of a cruel disposition like so many of his predecessors; neither was he an ascetic or a lugubrious saint. Every Friday after public prayers at the mosque there were great entertainments in the palace at which musicians, story-tellers, and athletes to the number of three thousand took part. He was an enthusiastic big-game hunter and an epicure in his choice of wines. "Some were yellow as saffron, some red as the rose, some were white; and the taste of all was like sweet milk."

An amusing anecdote told by his eulogistic biographer is a revelation of his character and like one of those delightful miniature pictures with which the court painters recorded the intimate life of the Great Moguls. The Sultan was marching with a brave and well-appointed army to bring Gaur back to its allegiance. The strictest discipline was to be observed among all ranks, such were the Sultan's orders. But one morning after prayers the Great King felt thirsty and called for a glass of his favourite wine. While he was "moistening his throat," the Khan-i-'Azam, Tātār Khan, a distinguished general and an austere and pious Muṣalman, came to the imperial tent to demand an audience on important business. The Sultan was greatly annoyed at the interruption, and sent his son, Fath Khan, to put him off with some excuse. But Tātār Khan insisted, and the Sultan, having hastily pushed the wine flask and cups under the couch and thrown a sheet over it, sat down on a coverlet to receive him. Immediately the general came into the imperial presence he sniffed the aroma of the wine, and his keen eye caught sight of the cups hidden under the couch. He was so troubled by the sight that his lips failed to utter the usual salutation. The Sultan spoke not a word, neither did he. At length Tātār Khan began to sermonise the shamefaced Sultan, reminding him that they

breathed the humanitarian spirit of Asoka's. "In the reigns of former kings," he declared, "the blood of many Musalmans has been shed, and many varieties of torture employed. . . . The Great and Merciful God made me, His servant, hope and seek for His mercy by devoting myself to prevent the unlawful killing of Musalmans and the infliction of any kind of torture upon them or upon any men." His religious feeling and high sense of justice were also shown in his desire to make amends, as far as possible, for the misdeeds of his predecessors. He gave orders that the heirs of all persons who had been put to death or mutilated in the last reign should be compensated from the imperial treasury, so that "they might be reconciled to the late Sultan" and sign declarations of their satisfaction. These documents were then put into a chest and deposited at the head of Muhammad's tomb, "in the hope that God in His great clemency would show mercy to my late friend and patron." In the same pious spirit he restored to their rightful owners all village lands and patrimonies that had been wrongfully taken from them in former reigns.

Like Akbar, Firuz Shah took a special interest in planning new cities, building palaces and mosques, as well as schools, hospitals, public rest-houses, and other charitable institutions, and in laying out gardens. Among other cities he built a new capital at Firuzābād, five *kos* distant from Delhi, in which there were eight public mosques each with a courtyard large enough for 10,000 worshippers. During the forty years of his reign, says his biographer, every kos on the road from Delhi to Firuzābād was crowded with carriages, palanquins, mules, and horses, besides foot-passengers swarming "like ants or locusts." Firuz Shah also founded Jaunpur, naming it in honour of his friend and patron, Muhammad Shah, one of whose names was Jaunān. It afterwards became the capital of the Sharkī Sultans and a great seat of Muhammadan learning, rivalling the fame of its ancient Hindu neighbour, Benares. Fathābād, or Futtehābād, named after his son, Fath Khan, and Hissār Firuza were also planned under the Sultan's orders, and amply provided, according to the Hindu tradition, with

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were marching against the enemy, and "the time was one for repentance, abasement, and prayer." Firuz Shah tried to dissimulate, asked what the general meant and whether anything untoward had happened. The Khan-i-'Azam replied sternly that "he perceived certain articles under the bed." "Yes, I like to take a little now and then," said the Sultan apologetically. But Tātār Khan was not to be put off with such feeble excuses, and after lecturing the humiliated monarch severely took an oath from him that he would drink no more wine while the Khan remained with the army. "Tātār Khan gave thanks to God and went away."

The Sultan kept his oath, but the Khan-i-'Azam did not remain long with the army. After the latter had left the tent Firuz Shah "sat brooding over the matter and thought the Khan had spoken to him in a disrespectful and unkind manner." He was magnanimous enough not to take severe notice of the old general's uncourtly behaviour; but a few days afterwards the Khan-i-'Azam was despatched to a remote district "to restore order and quiet." [1]

Firuz Shah's administrative reforms entitle him to a high place among the great rulers of India. During his long reign Hindustan recovered a great measure of its former prosperity and contentment. In secular matters he was guided by the high ideals of a royal race which his Rajput mother had taught him. The intolerable oppression of the ryots ceased. No demand in excess of the regular Government dues was allowed to be made. Agriculture revived, and while prices were lower than they had been in the days of 'Alā-ud-dīn, the homes of the ryots "were replete with grain, property, horses, and furniture," and every one had plenty of gold and silver.[2] Shams-i-Siraj 'Alif contrasts this state of prosperity with their condition under former Muhammadan sovereigns: "Several writers told the author of this work that it was the practice to leave the *raiyat* one cow and take away all the rest."

Firuz Shah's edicts, though not free from sectarian bias,

[1] *Tārīkh-i Fīroz Shāhi*, Elliot, vol. iii, pp. 306–307.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

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public fruit-gardens, wells, and reservoirs. One of his irrigation works was a great canal from the head-waters of the Jumna, Hānsi, and Hissār, which, however, fell into disuse after his death. It has been restored and extended by the British Government, and now irrigates a large tract of land in the Panjab. Firuz Shah is said to have laid out in the neighbourhood of Delhi alone no less than 1200 gardens planted with black and white grapes, some of which were leased for private cultivation, and some bestowed as endowments upon religious institutions.

Among his other administrative activities Firuz Shah paid great attention to the organisation of the institution of slavery; partly, it would seem, to prevent the inhuman massacre of prisoners of war, partly to increase the supply of skilled artisans in Musalman cities, and partly to bring more infidels within the Muslim pale. No doubt the Muhammadan invasions and the unsettled condition of Hindustan in the previous reigns had driven great numbers of Hindu craftsmen to avoid forced labour under Musalman masters by emigration. Firuz Shah gave orders to his officers and feudatories that as many prisoners as possible should be taken in war-time, and that the best should be sent for the service of the court. "Those chiefs who brought many slaves received the highest favour, and those that brought few received proportionately little consideration." The effect was that numbers far in excess of the Sultan's requirements were sent to Delhi, but the situation was met by distributing them over the different provinces. Some were employed in the Sultan's body-guard and personal service, or in the army. Some were sent to study the Qurān and the law of Islam at Mecca, or at the numerous Muslim colleges in India; others were apprenticed to tradesmen and taught handicrafts. In this way "12,000 slaves became artisans of various kinds."

The Sultan took great interest in the welfare of his proselytes, gave them fixed allowances in money or in kind, and created a separate department for administering their affairs. He showed the same consideration for Hindus who in order

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to escape the poll-tax, or for other reasons, voluntarily came to the mosques and professed the Muslim faith. The amirs and maliks, following the Sultan's good example, treated their slaves like children, "providing them with food and raiment, lodging them and training them, and taking every care of their wants." On their yearly visits to court they took their slaves with them and gave reports upon their merits and utilities, which Firuz Shah received with great interest. Unfortunately this happy state of things did not last long. After the Sultan's death, adds the court historian, "the heads of his favoured servants were cut off without mercy, and were made into heaps in front of the darbar." [1]

In spite of Firuz Shah's brilliant record, his reign was another illustration of the inherent weakness of Muhammadan polity. The power of a military caste had made the mere recital of the Musalman faith a social and political mantram as potent as any of those by which Brahman philosophers claimed to be able to control the forces of the universe. Nominally based upon the principle of universal brotherhood, the social programme of Islam became more tyrannous in its working than the caste system; for it exalted the rights of the individual above the rights of the community, through seeking to gain converts by compulsion and by material inducements rather than by an appeal to conscience or intellect. Hindu polity gave the monarch divine right as the representative of Vishnu, the Preserver and Lord of life—a right which had been earned by the merit of former lives—but even the lowest of his subjects might by a similar process of spiritual evolution rise to kingship.

The difference between the Hindu and Muhammadan systems is well illustrated in their different methods of building construction. In the former the weight of personal responsibility was evenly distributed from the top to the bottom of the political fabric, right down to the foundation of it in the village community. In the latter the stability of the structure depended upon the soundness of the keystones

[1] *Tārīkh-ī Fīroz Shāhī*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 342.

of the arches—if one failed the house might soon become unfit for human habitation. Islam produced many men of commanding ability and fine character, but never a great dynasty, giving to the State a long succession of happy and prosperous years. Under Hindu rule the prosperity of the State, as a whole, was to a large extent independent of the personal character of the ruling monarch; the strength of its foundations, broad based upon its village life, was proved by the rapidity with which it recovered from the effects of centuries of devastation and tyranny. Firuz Shah in a comparatively short time effaced the miserable record of his predecessor's misdeeds, but in his declining years his strength failed, and even before his death in 1388, at the age of ninety, the system of good government reconstructed by him began to fall to pieces. In a few years after his death Hindustan was again in a state of chaos; the defences of the north-west frontier broke down, and the Mogul hordes under Timūr poured in an overwhelming flood over the unhappy country.

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CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF THE MUHAMMADAN CONQUEST

BEFORE continuing the chronicle of the Muhammadan dynasties of India it will be well to consider the psychological aspect of the events of the period of four centuries from the time of Mahmūd of Ghazni to the invasions of Timūr. The materials for the study of this question are not to be found in the writings of Muhammadan historians. Brahmanical books for the most part pass over the Muhammadan invasions in silence. But India from the third century B.C. has an unbroken chain of psychological evidence, invaluable for historical research, by which the biased and distorted statements of Musalman historians can be checked. An impartial and sound judgment of this material is of vital importance for the understanding of Indian history.

A pious Hindu might easily be led to regard the long period of bloodshed and destruction which followed the Muhammadan invasions as an unmitigated disaster to his motherland and to the great civilisation of which Āryāvarta was the centre. But the true Hindu philosopher would not have failed to discern the will of Providence even in the blind rage of the Musalman fanatic: he was too devoted a student of natural laws not to understand that behind the apparent ruin of his cause lay a new impulse for the progress of the human race. Brahman culture in the field it had created for itself had reached its apex: its creative energy was on the wane. Endless reiteration and hair-splitting dialectics would not carry it to greater heights or widen the circle of its activity. On the contrary, mere mechanical processes of thought would tend to diminish

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the deductive power by which Hindu science had won its greatest triumphs. The metaphysical researches in which Hinduism was engaged were too abstruse for the comprehension of the masses: the elaborate symbolic ritual which served as a spiritual kindergarten for the latter was overgrown with superstition and chicanery, demoralising for both the teacher and the pupil. The sword of Islam was the Creator's pruning-knife which removed the decaying branches and cut back the unfruitful growth of the tree of knowledge He had planted in Āryāvarta.

The organisation of Buddhism, which, as a sectarian group, had lost its intellectual influence in India before Islam gained a footing in the Indus valley, was entirely broken up as the storm of the Muhammadan invasions spread over Hindustan. The Hindu aristocracy, representative of the higher Brahmanical culture which survived, either left their desecrated shrines and avoided the polluting touch of the barbarians by emigration, or, if circumstances compelled them to remain, began to seek a *modus vivendi* with the temporal power which supplanted their own. The first effect of the Muhammadan invasions and the break-up of many ancient seats of Brahmanical learning was therefore a great impetus to Aryan culture in the Dekhan and Southern India—a rush of learned Brahmans and skilled Hindu craftsmen to the friendly shelter of the Chola and Rāshtrakūta courts or those of their tributaries. This migration may have influenced, if it did not originate, the religious movement of which Rāmanūja, the Vaishnava reformer, was the leader at the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries. The north of India, since the Vaishnava revival under the Gupta emperors, had leaned for the most part toward this school of philosophic teaching, or its counterpart in Buddhistic doctrine, the Mahāyāna school. The South remained firmly attached to its early Brahmanical teachers—who in the ninth century, as we have already seen, found a new exponent in Sankarāchārya—or to their Buddhist rivals of the Hīnayāna school. Sankārāchārya had defeated the Jains in Southern India and completed the overthrow of

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Buddhism by popularising the Adwaita philosophy of the Vedānta—the theory of the 'One without a second,' which was the Brahmanical statement of Muhammad's formula, "There is no God but Allah."

Rāmanūja, who opposed to Sankarāchārya's teaching a qualified form of monism, according to tradition was born at Kānchi; but Southern Vaishnavism, says Sister Nivedita, "is the Vaishnavism of the Gupta Empire. It was the Vaishnavism that was spread far and wide with the story of the Mahābhārata."[1] Vaishnavism in Southern India, from a sectarian point of view, always remained an exotic: a fact which is emphasised in its temple architecture, for the famous shrines at Srirangam and Conjeveram have not the characteristic architectonic symbol of Vaishnavism—the sikhara, Vishnu's holy mountain, or the mystic blue lotus with turned-down petals—they are only Saiva temples, or symbols of the Great Yogi's hermitage at Kailāsa, in which Vishnu images are enshrined. We need not, however, take this as a proof that Rāmanūja's teaching had no permanent effect upon South Indian religious thought, but rather as an indication of the many points at which different lines of Indian thought intersected each other.

The development of the Aryanisation of the South was by no means the most important result of the impact of Islam upon Hindu civilisation. Of far greater consequence was its effect upon Islam itself. For just as in the days of Asoka the intellectual aristocracy of Āryāvarta began to make the teaching of the Buddha its own by formulating its metaphysical theories and giving them a Vedic interpretation, so the Brahmans of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries began to shape the metaphysics of Islam, to guide its statecraft and to reconcile racial and social antipathies by bringing it into the Hindu synthesis. It was into this effort that the finer spirits of Hinduism put their greatest strength and achieved the greatest results. In the service of Islam they healed the gaping wounds of their beloved motherland and

[1] *Footfalls of Indian History*, p. 208.

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won back by spiritual weapons what they had lost on the battlefield.

We have already seen how Islam, directly or indirectly, had been gathering spiritual nourishment from India, partly by intellectual intercourse and partly by racial assimilation, even before Muhammadan sovereignty was finally established on Indian soil. It is not, however, easy to demonstrate by concrete illustrations the subtle effect of such spiritual and physical intercourse upon the early development of Islam. In its early stages a new religion, when it is gathering to itself material from many sources, does not leave behind many traces of the process of its spiritual growth for historians to analyse. But the material for the study of the impact of Hinduism upon Islam, and *vice versa*, after the Muhammadan conquest is abundant, especially from the fourteenth century onward, when independent dynasties, mostly of Indian descent, began to set themselves up in the more distant provinces of the Delhi Empire. From that time the craftsmen of these Indo-Muhammadan courts began to revive the finest traditions of Hindu culture in their wonderful mosques, palaces, public gardens, wells, bathing-places, and irrigation works, consecrated, as of old, to the service of the One God whom Brahmans worshipped as Ishvara, or Narain, Muhammadans as Allah. In the heroic spirit of that noble Rajput lady, the mother of Firuz Shah, India surrendered her body to the Muhammadan conqueror that from her womb a new Islam might be born, and through her self-sacrifice the sufferings of Āryāvarta might be mitigated. This new Islamic culture, which began when Mahmūd of Ghazni made the royal craftsmen of Mathurā and Kanauj build for him the mosque of 'the Celestial Bride,' is in everything but name a Hindu Renaissance. Ahmadābād, the capital of Muhammadan Gujerat, was created by the royal craftsmen of Rājputāna; the Gaur of the Musalman Sultans was a new Lakhnauti; Benares was the mother of Jaunpur; Dhār the mother of Mandu; the royal craftsmen of the Vijayanagar rājas built the capital of the Muhammadan dynasty of Bijāpūr.

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Each of these Muhammadan royal cities developed distinctive types of building derived from the local characteristics of the parent Hindu cities. There was an interchange of ideas between different parts of Muhammadan India. Gaur, for instance, was in touch with the west coast through her maritime connections. Persia was a province of Aryan India, and there had been a constant interchange of ideas between Ariāna and Āryāvarta for thousands of years. The 'Saracenic' architecture of Persia was founded upon the old Buddhist building traditions which India had given to Western Asia: the pointed arch and the half-domed porches and windows of Persian mosques were an adaptation of the niched shrines in which Buddhist images were placed. The mullās, having satisfied their conscience by destroying the hated images, converted Buddhist temples into mosques and adopted the empty niches as a symbol of the true faith, so that gradually the niche with the pointed arch became an essential feature in the structure of new Muhammadan buildings.

The same thing happened in India. The mullās dictated their ritualistic requirements to the Hindu master-builders. The latter shaped them into architectural form according to the traditions of the Hindu Silpa-Sāstras, and thus created every type of Indo-Muhammadan architecture. The so-called Saracenic architecture of India was in no sense a foreign importation, as Western writers have made it, but a new development of Indo-Aryan culture. To say this is not to depreciate its superlative aesthetic merits, but to give it its true place in Indian history.

Naturally if the Western critic, plunging headlong into the study of Indo-Aryan culture, takes the perfected type of an Indian mosque or tomb, as it was developed in the seventeenth century, and compares it with a Hindu temple of the tenth century, he will find it impossible to realise that the one could be evolved from the other, or that the Muhammadan conquerors of India did not inspire Indian craftsmen with foreign ideas, or bring in 'Saracenic' builders to instruct them in the traditions of the West. He will assuredly agree

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with Fergusson that in some unexplored corner of Central Asia there will be found eventually the key to the mystery. But if the study of Indo-Muhammadan building is co-ordinated with the political and religious history of the period and carefully followed step by step from the beginning, it will not be necessary to fall back upon such a vague dilettante hypothesis.

Islam did not alter Indian aesthetic principles or add to them, but was the unconscious instrument of giving Indian art a new impulse. Indian master-builders had concentrated for many centuries upon the idea of the manifoldness of the Deity; they had gone as far as it was possible to go in that direction. Islam gave them an introspective bent of mind, and they began to concentrate on the idea of the Unity of the Godhead. The effect of this change of mood can be seen in the gradual development of an Indo-Muhammadan or new Indo-Aryan building tradition inspired by Indian ideals, not by the rank materialism of the Musalman conqueror. It was as if the philosophy of the Vedānta which permeated the esoteric thought of India gradually became embodied in the stone and marble of Indian mosques and tombs and crystallised in the ritualistic forms of the Muhammadan faith. But this aesthetic ideal was no new inspiration to Indian art: it ran through the whole tradition of Indian sculpture and painting from the beginning of the Christian era to the time of the Muhammadan conquest. The exquisite refinement of contour which Indo-Muhammadan tomb-builders achieved, and their comparative reticence in surface decoration, had their counterparts and prototypes in the marvellous profiles and massive generalisations with which the Indian painter realised his ideal of the divine Buddha at Ajantā; the inspiration of the Trimūrti of Elephanta and of the bronze Nātarāja of the Tanjore temple is evident in the tombs of the Pathān kings and in the dome of the Tāj Mahāll.

Nor is it surprising that the great political and social upheaval caused by the Muhammadan conquest should create a revolution in the technical traditions of Indian art. Painting and sculpture were specialised branches of Hindu temple

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architecture; but when the higher ranks of Hindu painters and sculptors—those who painted or sculptured the sacred images—shared the common fate of Indian craftsmen and became Muhammadan slaves, such specialisation would to a great extent cease; for neither figure-painting nor sculpture was allowed by the strict law of Islam. The painters and sculptors would for the most part become builders and designers of buildings, and thus Indo-Muhammadan building traditions formed a new synthesis of Hindu art. Neither is it surprising that under these political and social conditions the new synthesis should absorb the vital impulse of Indo-Aryan culture, or that Indo-Muhammadan building should exhibit an intense energy and vitality while the older Indo-Aryan tradition which survived in Southern India became more and more decadent and relapsed into the morbid growth of the temples of Halebīd. The victors in the political field soon controlled the richest resources of the economic and intellectual wealth of India; the older Hinduism was rapidly disintegrating while Islam was gaining strength at its expense. The more conservative of Brahman thinkers who refused to ally themselves with their new rulers might devote themselves to the conservation of their ancient traditions, but it is evident from the artistic record of later Hinduism that while they succeeded in maintaining outward forms and ritualistic practices they failed to preserve the creative vigour which Hinduism showed before the Muhammadan conquest.

It is very significant that during this process of development Islam in India was in a state of almost complete isolation, spiritually and intellectually, from the rest of the Muhammadan world.

From the twelfth century onward the Muhammadans of India, to whatever sect or race they might belong, though they professed a nominal spiritual allegiance to the Khalifate, were virtually subject to the authority of their own rulers in spiritual as well as in temporal matters; and with very few exceptions these rulers entirely ignored the direct representatives of the Prophet in Mesopotamia or Egypt. The Sultan

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of Delhi might defer to the judgment of the 'Ulamās on questions of doctrine or Muhammadan law, but as soon as Islam began to adapt itself to its Indian environment a strong Indian party was formed at court whose interpretation of the true faith would have seemed rank heresy to the orthodox doctors of Baghdad or Cairo. With very few exceptions the prayers in Indian mosques were said in the name of the reigning Sultan, instead of in the name of the Khalif. The name of the latter did not, as a rule, appear on any Indian coinage. Firuz Shah created a precedent by acknowledging the temporal authority of the Khalif and by sending some of his proselytes to Mekka, but his personal influence could not divert the main current of Muhammadan thought in India, which continued to receive numerous tributaries from the ancient sources of Indo-Aryan culture as its territorial conquests gradually extended further and further. It was more especially in the provincial centres that the tendency of Indian Muhammadanism to differentiate itself from the Western forms of the faith began to manifest itself.

In studying the relationship between Islam and Hinduism we must not neglect to take into account the fundamental differences of thought and doctrine which separated the two main sectarian groups of Islam—differences which had their original starting-point soon after the death of the Prophet. In the conventional sectarian sense the differences between Sunnis and Shiahs are centred in the dispute regarding the succession to the Khalifate. The Sunnis maintain the validity of the election of the first four Khalifs, the four friends of Muhammad: the Shiahs denounce the latter as usurpers and assert the claims of Ali, who married Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, and was the father of the Shiah martyrs, Hasan and Husain. But the psychological differences between the two sects went much deeper. The Sunnis were originally the orthodox disciples of Muhammad, taking their stand upon the text of the Qurān and the body of canonical doctrine (*Sunna*) which contained its recognised commentaries, and regarding with horror the least attempt to bring an external light to

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bear upon the exegesis of the Prophet's revelations. The nucleus of the Sunni sect, first formed by Arabs only, gradually attracted to itself Turks, Afghans, and people of other races who at the time of the Hegira were in a primitive stage of religious culture. In the ardour of their new-found faith they were intolerant of any views but those of their own religious teachers. The Prophet's denunciation of idolatry made them furious iconoclasts. His promise of Paradise to the soldiers of Islam who died for the cause was sufficient justification for indiscriminate slaughter of the infidels. They banned any paintings of animate beings as idolatrous.

The Shiahs, the dissenting sect, though originally of the same race as the Sunnis, rallied to their side the converts which Islam gained by compulsion or persuasion from the older and more highly developed religious systems of Asia, and absorbed into their own teaching a great deal of the mysticism of Aryan and Indo-Aryan religion; so that the dividing line between a follower of Zoroaster and a Persian Shiah, or between an orthodox Hindu and an Indian Shiah, was more a question of ritual than of esoteric religious doctrine. The Shiah was a philosopher, the Sunni a dogmatist. The Sufism of Persian Musalmans was a development of Shiah philosophy. The Sunnis had no desire to go beyond a literal interpretation of the law.

Persian Musalmans were mostly Shiahs; likewise Hindus of the higher castes when they embraced Islam. The Turki and Afghan conquerors of India were nominally Sunnis, but were generally only bigoted in their attachment to fighting and plunder. In religion they were opportunists. But the racial distinctions between Sunni and Shiah were always subject to modification by educational influences. Firuz Shah was a strict Sunni in spite of his Rajput mother, because his religious education was in the hands of Sunni teachers. The language and literature of the Sunnis were Arabic, and all Muhammadans whose religious teaching was confined to the Arabic schools would in ordinary circumstances be Sunni. Thus the Abyssinian Musalman was a Sunni. The Mogul

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who adopted Persian culture was generally a Shiah. The fact that the court language of Musalman India was Persian partly accounted for the leanings of Muhammadan India towards the Shiah sect, though the sympathies of cultured Hindus would naturally tend in that direction.

The typical Sunni of the cultured classes, like Firuz Shah, was often deeply religious and had a high sense of duty towards his fellow-Muslims; but his ideas of humanity and justice towards 'infidels' were as limited as those of the most intolerant Brahman towards the 'impure.' He was uncompromising in his attitude towards Hinduism in general, both in its esoteric and popular aspects. The internal differences of Islam helped to shape the course of political events in India, though perhaps the Western historian is generally inclined to exaggerate their importance. The Sunni faction in the Muslim courts, recruited by a constant influx of foreign mullās and military adventurers —Arabs, Abyssinians, Turks, and others—helped to keep alive the fierce sectarian and racial rancour of the first Muhammadan invasions. The Sunnis referred contemptuously to Indian Shiahs and to the Mogul mercenaries of the same sect as 'foreigners' and 'new Musalmans,' implying thereby that they were heathen and heretics. But the record of the struggles between the numerous Musalman kingdoms into which Hindustan and the Dekhan were split up in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries does not warrant the assumption that religious fanaticism was the principal motive of the disputes. Talboys Wheeler is hardly justified in describing the process of dismemberment which the Delhi Empire underwent in the time of Muhammad Tughlak and afterwards as "the Shiah revolt." Sunni fought with Shiah to obtain political mastery and to gather the spoils of war—not to assert the superiority of his own religious formula. The bigoted Sunni Sultan was as ready as his more tolerant Shiah rival to accept the help of the idolatrous Hindu rāja when it was useful to him in crushing a Musalman opponent. He was only more unscrupulous in his conduct towards his Hindu allies when the victory was won, as the rājas of the Dekhan learned

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from many bitter experiences. It was the hopeless misgovernment of the Delhi Sultans and the fundamental difference between the political ideals of Islam and Āryāvarta which provoked the revolt of the Dekhan and drove the Hindu rājas into the Shiah camp.

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CHAPTER V

BREAK-UP OF THE DELHI EMPIRE

THE province of Gaur, which included all Bihār and Bengal from Allahābād eastward, was one of the first to break away from the Delhi Empire. Twelve years before the death of Muhammad Tughlak, or in 1338, Malik Fakhr-ud-dīn, an officer in the provincial army, assassinated the Governor and proclaimed himself Sultan; but after a short reign was supplanted by a fellow-officer, 'Alā-ud-dīn, who was assassinated a few months afterwards. The kingdom was then for a time split up into two parts, each with an independent ruler. Firuz Shah made an ineffectual attempt to recover the province. In 1345 Shams-ud-dīn Ilyās, who seems to have been a naval officer, assassinated his master and founded the Purbīya dynasty of Bengal. In 1392 a Hindu zamindar, Rāja Kans, seized the throne, and his son, having embraced Islam, ruled for seventeen years under the name of Jalāl-ud-dīn.

Ferishta's account of the latter's conversion is very significant of the state of religious feeling amongst the ruling classes of Gaur at that time. After the death of Rāja Kans, who though a Hindu appears to have been accepted as their ruler without demur by the Muhammadan officers of the army as soon as he had proved himself the better soldier, his son, Jitmal, called together all the officers of State and expressed a desire to become a Musalman, adding that if they would not acknowledge him as their sovereign on those terms he was prepared to hand over the throne to his brother. His officers declared that they were disposed to accept him as their king without any reference to the religion he might choose to adopt. "So that several learned men among the Mahomedans of that

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country were summoned to witness Rāja Jeetmul renounce the Hindoo religion and profess that of the Moslems. He was at the same time entitled Julal-ood-Deen; and after ascending the throne, he ruled with such justice that he became entitled to the appellation of the Nowsherwan of the age. He reigned with great splendour for a period of seventeen years." [1] The army of Gaur at that time contained a large proportion of Hindus. Ferishta mentions that one of the Purbīya Sultans enlisted 5000 Hindu footmen as his body-guard.[2]

The rest of the history of the Muhammadan dynasties of Gaur until the time of Shēr Shah (1539–1545) has little interest; but the architecture of the capital is good evidence that Muhammadan culture in Gaur, as in other parts of India, was a graft upon the old Hindu stock and not an exotic transplanted from Arabia to Indian soil. The temples of Hindu Lakhnauti were destroyed so effectually by the first Sunni iconoclasts that hardly anything but their foundations can now be traced. Yet in all essential characteristics they grew up again in the mosques of Muhammadan Gaur. Except in the Arabic inscriptions carved upon the walls, the mosques bear not the faintest trace of inspiration other than Indo-Aryan. The domes and arches are Indian Buddhist, not 'Saracenic.' The arch with radiating *voussoirs*, which Fergusson assumes to be a foreign importation and makes the basis of his arbitrary classification of 'styles,' does not appear in the earlier buildings: its spontaneous development from the traditional forms of Magadhan temple architecture can be traced step by step in successive buildings as the local craftsmen became accustomed to the symbolism of the Muslim *mihrāb* and adapted it to the new structural conditions created by Muslim ritual. There could not be a worse method of writing history than to ignore the inner moving spirit of artistic modes of expression and determine their traditional character by a technical process such as the construction of arches.

The technical character of the buildings of Gaur was determined by the fact that Bengal is a brick-making country, and

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iv, p. 337. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 340.

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if we would trace the origin of the building processes of the Magadha country we must first look to the ancient home of the Aryan city-builders, for the lower valley of the Ganges was in all probability in communication with Mesopotamia when Aryan kings ruled in Babylon in the second millennium before Christ. The position of Gaur made it a naval port as well as a land fortress, and we learn from Ferishta that the Muhammadans of Bengal were in communication with those of the west coast in Mālwā and Gujerat. Further evidence of this fact is afforded by indications of Bengali craftsmanship in Muhammadan brick buildings of those provinces.

Between Delhi and the city of Gaur was another province—one of the five which belonged to the ancient Gaur kingdom—stretching along the Ganges from Kanauj to Bihār, with its capital at Jaunpur. At the end of the fourteenth century this also became independent of the Delhi Sultans, and remained so, under the Sharkī or 'Eastern' dynasty, for about a century. During this time Jaunpur became a great centre of Muhammadan culture. The extent to which the latter was indebted to its Indian environment is evidenced by the noble mosques and other buildings with which the capital was adorned by Indian master-builders, Hindu and Musalman, under the patronage of the Sharkī Sultans. The finest of the mosques, the Jāmi' Masjid, was completed in the reign of Husain Shah (1452–1478), whose memory is still cherished in Bengal for his efforts to reconcile the religious differences of the Hindu and Musalman communities. He was a great patron of vernacular literature as well as of vernacular art. By his orders one of the Hindu courtiers, Mālādhar Vasu, made what is said to be the first translation of the *Bhagavata* from Sanskrit into Bengali.[1] Apparently Brahman influence up to this time had prevented the sacred text being popularised in the vulgar tongue, from the same motives which made the Christian hierarchy oppose the translations of the Bible. He also ordered a translation of the Mahābhārata to be made.[2]

[1] Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 222.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 202.

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It must not, however, be understood that the Indian masses up to this time had been denied direct access to their own sacred texts. The Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana, and the Purānas were familiar to every Indian villager, and the great religious revivals of which Sankarāchārya, Rāmanūja, Chaitānya, and other Brahmans were the leaders were continually breaking down the caste barriers which prevented Sūdras and others from entering the Sanskrit *Tōls*, in which special religious instruction was given. The knowledge of Sanskrit was thus widely diffused among all classes of Hindus. Husain Shah's intention was to render the masterpieces of Indo-Aryan literature accessible to himself and to his co-religionists who were ignorant of the classical languages of India. According to tradition Husain Shah was also the originator of a religious cult which sought to unite Musalmans and Hindus in divine worship by using a common name for the Deity compounded of a Sanskrit word, *Satya*, and an Arabic word, *Pīr*.[1] Satya-Nārāyana, a synonym of Vishnu, had been worshipped in Bengal from time immemorial. Pīr was the Arabic equivalent for the Hindu conception of the Supreme Spirit. The religious literature of Bengal has preserved, says Mr Dinesh Chandra Sen, several poems dedicated to the worship of Satya-Pīr. The Muhammadan colleges of Jaunpur may therefore be said to have assisted in preparing the way for the great Vaishnava revival in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Chaitānya's ecstatic fervour roused even pious Musalmans to join the crowds which went through the villages of Bengal chanting the praises of Krishna.

It is also significant that Jaunpur was one of the centres of the Mahdawi movement in the middle of the same century. The Shaikh 'Alāī was a Bengali Musalman.[2] Akbar's chief counsellor in religious matters, Shaikh Mubārak, had attached himself in his early days to an Afghan Musalman preacher of the Jaunpur school, Miyān Abdulla. Husain Shah was

[1] Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 797.

[2] Blochmann, *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Introduction, p. v.

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Akbar's forerunner, and the latter's religious brotherhood, the Dīn-Ilāhī, was an organised effort to develop the teaching of Islam on the lines of the Jaunpur school.

Another of the provinces of the Delhi Empire to set up an independent Muhammadan dynasty in the stormy days of Muhammad Tughlak was that of Kulbarga, in the Dekhan. The founder, Hasan Gāngū Bāhmani (Brāhmani), was the servant of Gāngū, a Brahman astrologer who enjoyed high favour at the Delhi court. He had risen to the chief command of the army of the Dekhan when the general revolt of Hindus and Musalmans caused by Muhammad Tughlak's tyranny gave him an opportunity of making a kingdom for himself. Having defeated the imperial forces with the aid of the Rāja of Telingana, he assumed sovereignty as the first Muhammadan king of the Dekhan at Kulbarga in 1347, and took the name of Bāhmani, it is said, in gratitude to his former patron, who became his Finance Minister. This, observes Ferishta, was the first time that a Brahman had accepted office in the service of a Muhammadan sovereign. Before that time Brahmans had held aloof from public affairs and passed their lives in the duties of religion and in the study of the Vedas, never accepting an official position, though as physicians, astronomers, philosophers, and historians they had sometimes associated themselves with the ruling powers. After Gāngū's time the Brahmans of the Dekhan controlled the finances of the Musalman kings.[1] The former statement, though not exactly correct, may be accepted as another indication of the gradual reconciliation of Hinduism with the ruling powers which had its beginning in the fourteenth century.

The Bāhmani kingdom was coterminous with Mahārāshtra, or the Mahratta country. It extended from Berar on the north to the Krishna river on the south; on the west it was bounded by the Ghats. The Hindu state Telingana, or the Telugu country, barred its access to the east coast. South of the Krishna river the remnant of the Hindu kingdoms formed a strong coalition under the Rājas of Vijayanagar, which for

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. ii, p. 292.

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a long time held the Musalman at bay. The royal mosque at Kulbarga, the capital, is a fine example of the creative genius of the Hindu craftsman; it marks an important stage in the evolutionary process of Muhammadan architecture in the Dekhan, which reached its culmination in the magnificent tombs, mosques, and palaces of Bijāpūr. The covered courtyard of the Kulbarga mosque is an adaptation of the traditional Indo-Aryan plan of the hundred- or thousand-pillared halls used for public assemblies or royal audiences.

The dynastic history of the Dekhan from the time of the founding of the Bāhmani dynasty until its extinction in 1525 is mainly a record of local wars between Musalman rivals or Hindu states, often marked by great ferocity and by indiscriminate slaughter of non-combatants, but not more interesting historically than those which occurred when Hindu rājas were the only combatants and settled their disputes according to more chivalrous rules of warfare. Kulbarga remained the chief Muhammadan capital until 1422, when the Bāhmani court was removed to Bīdar, about sixty miles to the north-east. At the end of the fifteenth century the centre of Muhammadan power in the Dekhan shifted to Bijāpūr under the Turkish dynasty of the 'Adil Shāhis.

An offshoot of the Bāhmani kingdom was that of Ahmadnagar, founded in 1490 by Ahmad Nizām Shah, the son of a Brahman convert whose father having been taken prisoner by the army of Ahmad Shah Bāhmani had won for himself a high position at the court of Kulbarga. The Ahmadnagar or Nizām Shāhi dynasty lasted till 1595.

Gujerat, Mālwā, and Khāndēsh were the three Musalman states lying to the south and south-east of Rājputāna which, from the end of the fourteenth century, had separate dynasties independent of the Sultanate of Delhi. The founder of the Gujerati dynasty, Muzaffar Shah, was the son of a Rajput who having been taken prisoner saved his life by accepting the Muslim faith. There was consequently an undying feud between the Gujerati rulers and all the Rajput princes who had not bowed their necks to the Musalman yoke. The two

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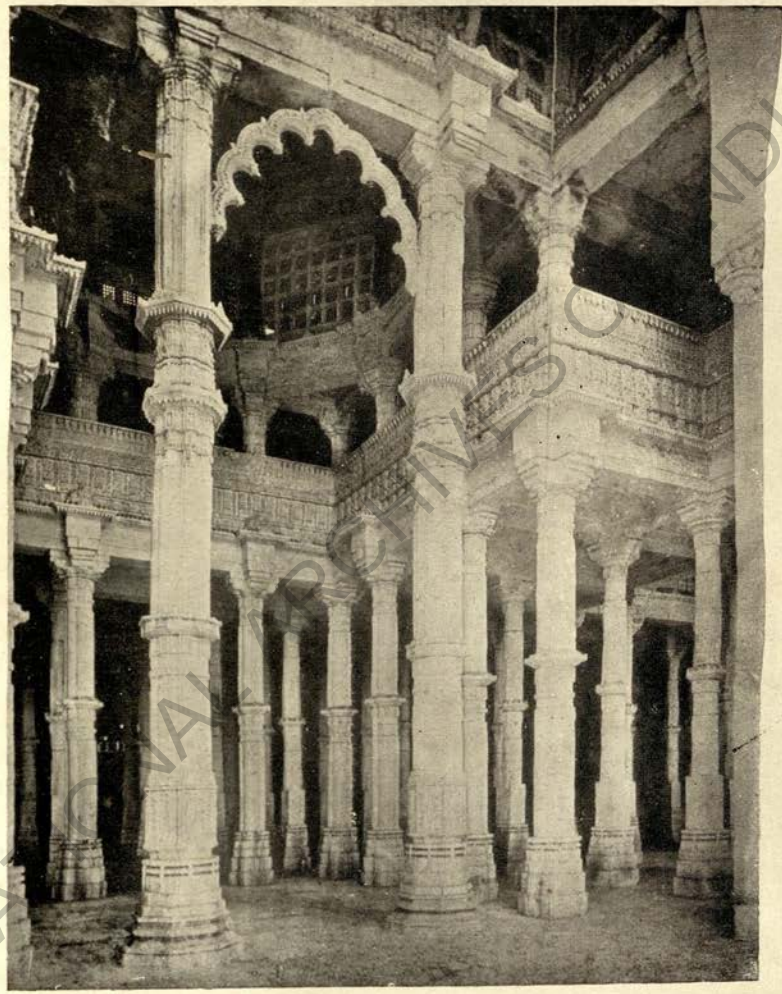

23. Interior of the Jāmi' Masjid, Ahmadābād

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Muhammadan dynasties of Mālwā and Gujerat at first kept up very friendly relations, but when Hushang Ghūri, the second of the Mālwā line, was suspected of having poisoned his father, Muzaffar Shah marched against him, took Hushang's capital, Dhār, and made him a prisoner. Muzaffar found it politic to reinstate him on the throne, but from that time there were frequent hostilities between the two states, though occasionally they combined against their common enemy, the Rāna of Chitor.

Muzaffar Shah's capital was the ancient Hindu city Anhilwār, but his grandson and successor, Ahmad Shah, moved to Karnāvāti, which was then renamed Ahmadābād. Ahmad (1412–1443), the most distinguished of his line, was a doughty warrior. He upheld the military prestige of his Kshatriya ancestry both in contests with the Hindu princes of his own race, the Rājas of Idar, Jhalāwar, and others, and with his namesake Ahmad Shah Bāhmani of Kulbarga. But for the greater part of his long reign he was occupied with a series of campaigns against his grandfather's adversary, Sultan Hushang of Mālwā, who sought to avenge his former defeat by combining with Ahmad Shah's Rajput enemies and with the rival Muhammadan state, Khāndēsh.

Ahmad Shah, however, is more entitled to be remembered as a great Rajput city-builder than as a Musalman sultan. The splendid city he laid out according to the ancient Indo-Aryan tradition was divided into 360 *mahallas*, or wards. The plan was based upon the village unit, each mahalla being self-contained and enclosed by walls. The principal streets, the Rājamargas and Mahākalas, were wide enough to admit ten carriages abreast, and the houses were generally substantially built of bricks and had tiled roofs. The royal mosque, the Jāmi' Masjid, one of the most beautiful in India, was an adaptation to Muhammadan ritual of the contemporary Rajput temple. It resembles very closely, both in structure and in ornamentation, the Jaina temple of Rānpur, which the Rāna of Chitor, Kumbha, Ahmad's most formidable antagonist, was building about the same time. Fergusson, not generally

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enthusiastic over Hindu art, finds more poetry in the temple than in the mosque, though he guards himself by adding, "There is a sobriety about the plan of the mosque which may, after all, be in better taste."[1]

It is noticeable how in the Rānpur temple the Hindu builders seem to have tried to avoid offence to Musalman susceptibilities by omitting the usual sculptured ornamentation on the exterior of the domes. Perhaps many of them had been previously employed in building mosques and had adopted the Musalman rule of leaving the exterior of the domes without carving of any kind, just as Hindu temple-builders of the present day often take suggestions from the 'Gothic' and 'Classic' buildings of the Public Works Department.[2] But many Jaina and Hindu teachers both before and after the Muhammadan invasions had condemned the ritualistic use of images as contrary to the true spirit of Vedic philosophy. Probably it was with the object of reconciling Indo-Aryan religion with Islam that Jaidev in the thirteenth century and Rāmanand in the fourteenth were as emphatic as the mullās in denouncing idolatry. Chaitānya's mission would not have been so indulgently regarded by Muhammadan officials if he had not avoided giving offence on this point. Kabīr, the Hindu weaver, was so strong in his protest against image-worship that Muhammadans disputed with Hindus for the honour of performing his funeral rites. Nanak, the first guru of the Sikhs, taught the vanity of image-worship; the tenth guru, Govind Singh, absolutely prohibited it.

Thus, although Hinduism as a whole clung tenaciously to its ancient tradition of popular symbolism, the Hindu master-builders, who were the interpreters of the Sāstras of temple craftsmanship, were not uninfluenced by Islamic doctrine, and in the districts where Muhammadanism was strong the mandapam of a temple built after the fourteenth century can hardly be distinguished from the porch of a mosque. On the sacred

[1] *Indian Architecture*, 2nd edit., vol. ii, p. 232.

[2] It must be said to the credit of the Indian master-builders that their adaptations are generally more Gothic and Classic in spirit than the originals.

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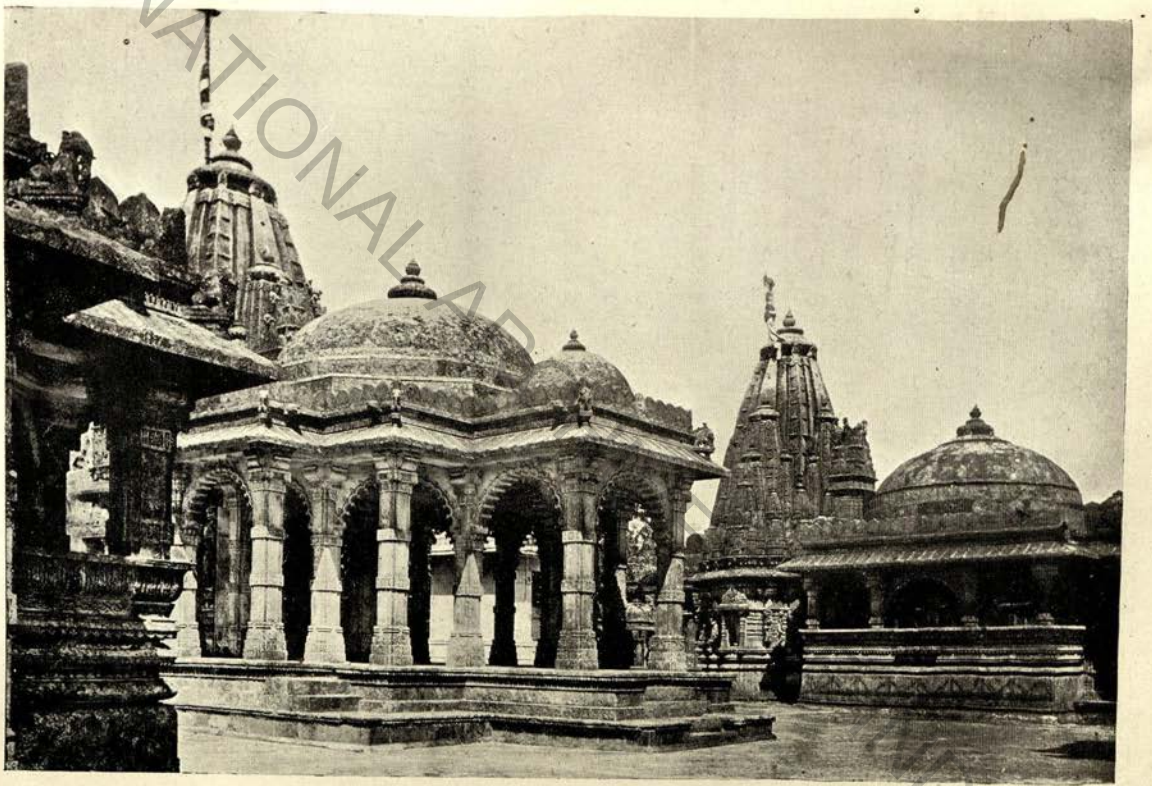

24. Jain Temples at Palitāna, with so-called Pathān Domes

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hill of Palitāna most of the domes of Jaina temples are what archaeologists describe as 'Pathān,' though they have not the remotest connection with Pathān craftsmanship. They are only Hindu domes with a plain instead of a sculptured exterior, illustrating the process by which the Hindu captives of Musalman sovereigns from the time of Mahmūd of Ghazni adapted Indo-Aryan building traditions to the ritual of Islam and created what is misnamed 'Pathān' architecture.

The territory comprised in the Musalman kingdom of Gujerat is particularly rich in remains of Indo-Aryan civilisation, both before and after Muhammadan times. The Muhammadans, as in other provinces, destroyed the temples, only to rebuild them as mosques. Under the independent Musalman dynasty the traditions of Rajput polity, which had been suppressed so long as Gujerat was a province of the Delhi Empire, were revived. Ahmad Shah followed the Indo-Aryan practice of establishing his soldiers upon the land instead of paying them wages as mercenaries. Outside the chief towns Hinduism continued to flourish, and the Musalman land-system did not disturb to a great extent the old relationship between the freehold *ryotwari* and the ruling power.

Under Ahmad Shah's successors Gujerat rose to be one of the most powerful of the Musalman kingdoms of Hindustan. Mahmūd Begarah (1459–1511) reduced two of the strongest Rajput hill-fortresses, Girnar or Junaghar, and Champanīr, which had held out for several centuries. The Musalman victor, stung perhaps by taunts reminding him of his Rajput ancestor's apostasy, was inflexible towards the two Hindu rājas when they fell into his hands. They were given the choice of accepting Islam or death. Girnar preferred to live; Champanīr and his minister, who were both wounded in the last desperate rush, after the dread sacrifice of Rajput royalty had been performed, suffered death.

The Rānas of Chitor, with the flower of Rajput chivalry, which rallied under their banner, still kept up the struggle of centuries, and were at constant war with Gujerat or with Mālwā, or with both, swooping down from the hills of Mewār

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when occasion offered and returning to the shelter of their ancestral strongholds, sometimes laden with the spoils of victory, sometimes with the avenging Musalman in hot pursuit. In 1418 Kumbha Rāna defeated the combined armies of Gujerat and Mālwā. In 1440 Mahmūd Khilji of Mālwā made a desperate assault upon the Chitor citadel, but was driven back by Kumbha Rāna, who built the magnificent *Jaya stambha*, 122 feet high, to celebrate his victory. This long period of hostility was, however, broken in the sixteenth century when Ratan Singh of Chitor and Bahādur Shah of Gujerat joined in assisting the Rajputs of Mālwā to put an end to the impossible rule of the Afghan Sultan Mahmūd.

In the middle of the fifteenth century Gujerat and Mālwā played the most important part in the politics of Hindustan, for the Sultanate of Delhi shrank into a second-rate Muhammadan power after the sack of the city by Timūr. In 1509 Sikandar Lodi of Delhi sent an embassy with rich presents to Ahmadābād to congratulate Mahmūd Shah Begarah on his victories over the infidel—the first occasion on which the Delhi Sultanate had recognised the independence of Gujerat. The fame of the Rajput Sultan even reached to the court of Persia, and in 1511 Shah Ismail sent a Turkish officer on a complimentary mission to Ahmadābād; but Mahmūd died before the envoy could obtain an audience.[1]

The long reign of Mahmūd Shah Begarah is also memorable for the appearance of the Portuguese upon Indian soil—the first Europeans who had gained a footing there since the days of Alexander the Great. In 1498 the three ships of Vasco da Gama, after a perilous voyage round the Cape, arrived off the coast of Malabar, and Don Vasco and his officers, bearing a letter from King Emanuel of Portugal, were received first by the Brahman ministers of the Zamorin of Calicut in the mandapam of the temple, and afterwards by the Zamorin himself at his palace. But the not unnatural suspicions aroused by the appearance of the mysterious foreigners and the high-handed action of the Portuguese in seizing some fishermen as hostages

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iv, p. 77.

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25. Tower of Victory, Chitor

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led to hostilities, and Vasco da Gama was compelled to return to Lisbon with the loss of two-thirds of his crews, only bringing his Indian captives to bear witness to his great discovery.

A second and larger expedition under Alvarez Cabral succeeded in obtaining the Zamorin's permission to establish a factory at Calicut, but this was burnt down by an exasperated mob when the Portuguese appropriated the cargo of a Musalman merchant ship. Cabral by way of reprisals bombarded Calicut and burnt the Indian shipping lying in the harbour. He then opened negotiations with some of the neighbouring Hindu princes through a Brahman yogi, and with their aid obtained the merchandise he wanted. The yogi, it is said, afterwards became a Christian.

The subsequent conduct of the Portuguese seems to have justified their association in the minds of the inhabitants of Malabar with the native pirates who at that time were the terror of the Indian seas. Vasco da Gama returned in 1502 with a well-armed fleet, and promptly began to imitate the military and naval code of the pagan by burning and sinking every Musalman ship, armed or unarmed, he met—sparing neither women nor children except a few who were rescued to be baptized as Christians. The Rāja of Cochin, impressed by the Portuguese defiance of the Musalman power, allowed them to build a fort and factory at Cochin, and acknowledged himself as a vassal of King Emanuel. This brought upon the Rāja an attack from the Zamorin of Calicut and his allies, which was, however, unsuccessful. From that time the Portuguese began to be firmly established in their Indian possessions under the famous viceroy Alfonso da Albuquerque, who seized Goa and drove out a colony of traders planted there by the Sultan of Bijāpūr. The Portuguese territory was protected on the land side by the almost impassable forests and mountains of the Western Ghats, and thus was admirably adapted for colonisation by a strong naval power.

Naturally the Musalman authorities at Gujerat were not pleased with the proceedings of the European intruders and

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did their best to support their co-religionists. The Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, whose commerce with India was interrupted by the Portuguese rovers, fitted out a great fleet in the Red Sea and sent a message to the Sultan of Gujerat requesting his co-operation in exterminating the infidel who "had usurped the dominion of the ocean." Mahmūd Begarah, whose seaports were threatened by the Portuguese, ordered his admiral to act in concert with the Egyptian Sultan's fleet. In the first engagement, off the port of Choul, south of Bombay, the Portuguese flag-ship was sunk, and, according to the Musalman historian, "three or four thousand Portuguese infidels were at the same time sent to the infernal regions." The Viceroy of Goa thereupon sailed with the rest of his ships to Dīu and took his revenge upon the pagans by practically annihilating the Egyptian or Turkish fleet. The Gujerati Sultans after this demonstration of the naval strength of Portugal thought it politic to make terms with the enemies of Islam.

Bahādur Shah lost most of his territory in a war with the Moguls, and in return for some assistance rendered by the Portuguese in recovering it he allowed the latter to build a fort upon the island of Dīu. Subsequently, however, he was so annoyed by the depredations of the Portuguese armed merchantmen that he sent an embassy to Constantinople to ask for the assistance of a Turkish fleet in expelling the Europeans, but before the fleet arrived he was killed by the Portuguese in an affray in the harbour of Dīu. In a subsequent siege the fort was heroically defended by the Portuguese against the Turkish forces. The Turks only succeeded in alienating their Indian allies by their brutal behaviour and were compelled to withdraw. Dynastic troubles and a succession of incompetent rulers in the sixteenth century reduced Gujerat to a state of anarchy. In 1572 Muzaffar Shah III abdicated, and his Sultanate was added to the empire of the Moguls.

We must now go back to the early history of the two other independent Musalman states which played a more or less prominent part in the events of the fourteenth and fifteenth

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centuries, Mālwā and Khāndēsh. The Mālwā dynasty was Afghan by race and Sunni in religious dogma, the founder, Dilāwar Shah, claiming relationship with the Ghūri dynasty of Delhi and with the Sultan Shahāb-ud-dīn of Damascus. Racial antagonism would therefore account for the frequent quarrels with the Rajput dynasty of Gujerat, without regard to the sectarian differences between the two Musalman houses. Mālwā was one of the earliest and most important centres of Indo-Aryan culture, its great university at Ujjain being already famous in the days of the Buddha. The province was conquered by Ghiyās-ud-dīn early in the fourteenth century. It was ruled from Delhi by provincial governors until 1401, when Dilāwar Ghūri seized the opportunity of the overthrow of the Delhi Sultans by Timūr to declare his independence.

The first seat of the Musalman government was Dhār, the ancient Hindu capital. But Hushang Shah, the second Sultan (1405–1432), after his defeat by Muzaffar Shah of Gujerat removed his court to Mandu, a noble plateau about thirty miles in circumference separated from the surrounding plains by deep ravines and high cliffs, easily made impregnable by artificial defences. It was, like Chitor, one of those natural fortresses characteristic of that part of India, extremely difficult of access for an enemy, but surrounded by fertile plains which seemed designed by the Creator for the development of the Aryan patriarchal ideal and the cult of Vishnu—the Protector of the Aryan people—where the herdsmen could graze their cattle and the ryots till their lands around the citadel—the sacred hill—while the Kshatriya warriors kept watch and ward from the fortress walls and gopurams. The extent of the plateau and the broken country at the foot of it made the complete investment of the fortress impossible except for a very large army. There was a plentiful supply both of water and forage within the fortress walls.

Mālwā, besides its sacred hill, had also—like every Indo-Aryan state—its sacred river, the Narbadā, along whose banks Vedic rishis had meditated in their rock-cut hermitages, succeeded by many generations of pious Hindus, Jains, and

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Buddhists. Here also Muhammadan *pīrs*, infected by the same religious spirit, took up their solitary abode, holding communion with the Deity Who regards not forms and ceremonies. At Mandu Hushang's Indian master-builders built him a splendid fort and palace, a Jāmi' Masjid, dharmasālas and reservoirs, and a royal city such as their forefathers had built for many successive Indo-Aryan dynasties, only adapting themselves to the puritanical sentiment of the Sunni sect by the strictest reticence in decorative detail, so that, in archaeological parlance, the style of the buildings is said to be 'Pathān.'[1]

Hushang directly after the death of Muzaffar Shah of Gujerat took advantage of dynastic disputes in that country to lay waste the territory of his Musalman neighbour and thus revenge himself for his former defeat. Ahmad Shah, as soon as he had secured himself on the throne of Ahmadābād, took up the challenge, and henceforth there was war to the knife between the Afghan and Rajput rulers, the Sunni Sultan sometimes supporting Ahmad's Hindu opponents, but leaving them to their fate when it seemed politic to do so, and sometimes playing from his own hand. In 1422 Ahmad Shah invaded Mālwā and laid siege to Mandu, investing it closely on the northern side, but not being able to surround it completely owing to the difficult character of the hilly country. Hushang accordingly took an opportunity to slip unperceived through one of the southern gates, and in the disguise of a merchant set out with a picked body of horsemen to procure the war-elephants which he greatly needed from the Rāja of Jajnagar, in the Orissa country, famous for its elephant forests, and more than a month's journey from Mandu. To barter for the elephants he took with him some fine horses to suit the Rāja's fancy and a quantity of valuable silk and cotton goods. When the pretended merchants arrived an altercation took place between them and the Rāja's servants, and in a

[1] Fergusson classifies pre-Muhammadan architecture according to sectarian distinctions—'Buddhist,' 'Jain,' and 'Hindu.' To be consistent Indo-Muhammadan buildings should be classified as 'Sunni' and 'Shiah' instead of 'Pathān,' 'Mogul,' etc.

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sudden thunderstorm which came on when the Rāja arrived the fine brocades and muslins were trampled upon and spoilt by the royal elephants. Hushang and his followers without hesitation sprang upon their horses, attacked the Rāja's escort and made the Rāja a prisoner. The Mālwā Sultan then disclosed his identity, and the Rāja was glad to purchase his release with seventy-five elephants, though Hushang insisted that he should accompany him as a hostage to the borders of his dominions, and the unhappy Rāja was forced to part with a few more of his finest elephants before he got rid of his unwelcome visitor.

On his return to Malwa after this exploit Hushang found that his capital was still holding out, but to insure against the risk of its falling before he could come to its relief he persuaded the Rāja of Kehrla to join forces with him. The Sultan then seized the person of the Rāja and took possession of his fort. After this second successful ruse he marched to Mandu and entered triumphantly by the southern gate while Ahmad Shah's forces were occupied on the northern side, the besiegers being ignorant of the Mālwā Sultan's return until it was announced from the fortress walls by the blare of war-horns and the beating of drums.

Ahmad Shah thereupon raised the siege of Mandu in disgust and marched southward toward Sarangpur through Ujjain; but the adroit Afghan, taking a more direct route, arrived before him. Then to throw Ahmad off his guard Hushang wrote him a submissive note proposing that they should both desist from shedding Musalman blood and enter into negotiations for a lasting peace. Ahmad Shah fell into the trap. While the Mālwā envoy was still in the Gujerati camp, Hushang made a sudden night attack upon it. The Mālwā troops surrounded the royal pavilion, and Ahmad owed his life to the gallant defence of his Rajput body-guard, under the command of the Rāja of Dankūlā, which enabled him to escape under cover of darkness and re-form his scattered army. At daybreak Ahmad Shah with a picked body of Gujeratis fell upon the Mālwā army while it was counting its spoil, and Sultan

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Hushang was not only completely defeated, but lost a good number of the elephants he had stolen from Jajnagar and a considerable amount of treasure.

During his thirty years' reign Sultan Hushang was perpetually at war, but though he gained some temporary successes by cunning and treachery he was not able to overcome any of his powerful neighbours. When he was not engaged with his Gujerati rival he was fighting sometimes with the Dekhani Muhammadans under Ahmad Shah Bāhmani, sometimes with those of Jaunpur under Ibrāhīm Shah Sharkī, and sometimes with the Delhi Sultan. He died in 1432, and was buried at Hushangābād, a city he founded on the Narbadā river; but subsequently his body was conveyed to Mandu and reinterred there in the stone vault of a splendid mausoleum, from the sides of which, pious Musalmans declared, water miraculously oozed in the dry season only, as if the very rocks were lamenting the death of the doughty warrior who upheld the cause of Islam. In 1435 the Ghūri dynasty of Mālwā became extinct and the succession passed over to another Afghan dynasty, the Khilji, also connected with the Delhi Sultanate. The first Sultan, Mahmūd Khilji (1436–1452), was famed as a patron of learning and founded several colleges in different parts of his kingdom for the study of philosophy and religion.[1] He continued the war against Gujerat, and once unsuccessfully besieged Delhi; but he was chiefly occupied with campaigns against the Rāna of Chitor and the Bāhmani Sultans of the Dekhan.

It is clear from the promiscuous character of these local wars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that religious principles were seldom at stake. It was war for war's sake. Religious controversy made as good a pretext as any other for making war, but Shiah fought against Shiah and Sunni against Sunni. Hindus fought on one side or the other, according to circumstances. When Musalman war-lords were tired of fighting each other they joined in falling on the idolatrous Hindu; but outside the ranks of the fighting men Hindus and Musalmans for the most part lived peacefully

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iv, p. 197.

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together and learned to reconcile their religious differences. Rácial animosities and political disputes were the principal causes of dissensions among the masses.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century the Hindu Rajputs for a time regained possession of Mandu. The last Sultan of Mālwā, Mahmūd II (1510–1530), was under deep obligations to Mēdni Rāi, an able Rajput chieftain, who had rendered invaluable assistance in securing his succession to the throne when many of the Muhammadan nobles had espoused the cause of his elder brother. As Mahmūd's chief minister Mēdni Rāi seems to have acted loyally and with conspicuous courage in a position of extreme difficulty. Mahmūd, a brave soldier but a capricious and incompetent ruler, left the administration in his hands. Mēdni as a Hindu and Rajput was hated by the Arab, Persian, and Abyssinian officials of the Mandu court, who were at the same time poisoning the mind of the Sultan and plotting against his life. Mēdni's drastic measures in getting rid of them and replacing them by Rajputs whom he could trust infuriated the foreign Musalmans. At last they raised the standard of revolt and sent a petition to Sikandar Lodi, the Delhi Sultan, stating that the idolaters had become virtually masters of the country and were defiling the mosques, while the Sultan Mahmūd was a puppet in their hands and refused to listen to his Muhammadan officers and subjects. It was expected, they said, that Mēdni Rāi would soon depose the Sultan and place his own son upon the throne. They therefore begged the Delhi Sultan to send an army to which the faithful might rally, so that Sahib Khan, the brother of Mahmūd, might be proclaimed Sultan of Mālwā.

Sikandar Lodi was persuaded to send an army of 12,000 horsemen to assist the rebels, and Muzaffar Shah of Gujerat also invaded Mālwā. In this dangerous situation Mēdni Rāi proved himself equally skilful in war and in diplomacy. Accompanied by the Sultan he marched against the Gujeratis and defeated them, forcing Muzaffar Shah to return to Ahmadābād. At the same time he succeeded in promoting dissensions between the Mālwā rebels and the Delhi Sultan's general, so

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that Sikandar Lodi recalled his army. Sultan Mahmūd thereupon fell upon the rebel forces and dispersed them. Sahib Khan and his chief supporters made overtures for peace, which Mahmūd, doubtless advised by Mēdni Rāi, thought fit to accept, ceding to his brother several forts and giving him a substantial grant for his maintenance.

The Sultan's confidence in his minister after these events was naturally increased; but Mēdni Rāi's difficulties were by no means lessened, for the Musalman officials' opportunities of squeezing the infidel grew smaller and smaller under the Rajput chieftain's strong administration. The friction between the Rajputs and the malcontent Musalmans led to frequent disturbances, and finally Ghalib Khan, a former governor of Mandu, took the opportunity when Mahmūd was out hunting to shut the gates of the fortress and refuse admission to the royal party. The Sultan proceeded to invest the citadel, and with the aid of the loyal Rajputs Ghalib Khan was seized and executed. After this Mēdni Rāi, says Ferishta, made a clean sweep of all Muhammadan officials, so that the whole of the offices of government were filled by Rajputs.

At last the Sultan, though he had no reason to trust his intriguing Musalman courtiers, began to suspect the motives of his too powerful minister, and resolved to disband all his Rajput soldiers, to the number of 40,000. Not daring to meet Mēdni Rāi face to face with such a proposal, he sent, according to the Indian custom when a servant is discharged for no fault, a basket with 40,000 packets of *pān*, directing Mēdni Rāi to distribute them among his Rajput soldiers and disband them. This clumsy proceeding deeply wounded the proud Rajputs, who had several times proved their steadfast loyalty to their sovereign on the field of battle, and caused the greatest excitement among them. They sent a deputation to Mēdni Rāi, their hereditary chief, proposing to remove the ungrateful Sultan and place his own son on the throne. The minister refused to listen to such a proposal, giving the very good reason that it would bring the united armies of Gujerat, Khāndēsh, and the Dekhan to the rescue of Sultan Mahmūd. He pacified

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his angry followers and advised them to appeal to the Sultan and beg him to reconsider his intention of discharging them.

Mahmūd, yielding at Mēdni Rāi's intervention, agreed to cancel his orders, on condition that all the court appointments should in future be filled by Muhammadans, that discharged Musalman officials should be reinstated, that no Muhammadan women should be retained in Rajput zanānas, and that no Hindu should hold any civil office at court. Mēdni Rāi remained Prime Minister, but the insult the Rajput officers had received continued to rankle, and the relations between them and the Sultan began to be strained. At last Mahmūd determined to get rid of Mēdni Rāi and another of the Rajput chiefs, Salivahan, by assassination. The Musalman body-guard waylaid them; Salivahan was killed, but Mēdni Rāi escaped to his house covered with wounds.

All the Rajputs in Mandu flew to arms, and attacked the Sultan in his palace; but Mahmūd with his body-guard fought with desperate courage and kept them at bay. They then withdrew to Mēdni Rāi's house and begged him to put himself at their head. Mēdni refused, ordered his followers to retire to their quarters, and sent word to the Sultan that he was ready for the good of the State to lay down his life, if his Majesty thought that he should do so, and requested the Sultan's orders. Mahmūd, foiled in his treacherous scheme, received Mēdni Rāi into favour again, but the situation had become impossible for both sides, and it was not long before the shifty Sultan, accompanied only by his Master of the Horse, his favourite mistress, and a few followers, slipped out of Mandu by night and fled to Ahmadābād, relying on the assistance of the Gujerat Sultan, Muzaffar Shah. The latter received the fugitives hospitably, and marched his army to attack the Rajputs at Mandu. In the meantime Mēdni Rāi, leaving garrisons at Mandu and other Mālwā fortresses, had gone to Chitor to invoke the aid of the Rāna Sanga. Muzaffar Shah laid siege to Mandu, and in 1519 the hitherto impregnable fortress was taken by assault, the Rajputs resisting to the

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last, and sacrificing their women and children, according to their tradition, rather than allow them to become slaves of the Musalmans.

Muzaffar Shah, having reinstated Mahmūd on his throne, returned to Ahmadābād, leaving his army to continue the contest with Mahmūd's Rajput adversaries. Mēdni Rāi at last returned with a great army led by Rāna Sanga. Mahmūd, against the advice of Asaf Khan, the Gujerat general, immediately gave battle, and headed a furious charge of the Gujerati cavalry against nearly 50,000 Rajput horse. The result was that the Gujerat army was almost annihilated. Asaf Khan's son and thirty other officers of rank were slain, and Mahmūd, fighting like a lion until none of his body-guard were left, was severely wounded and taken prisoner. The Rāna, with extraordinary magnanimity, ordered his wounds to be attended to, and when he had recovered sent him back to Mandu with an escort of a thousand Rajput horse. Thus for the second time a Muhammadan Sultan was placed on his throne by the chivalry of a Rajput warrior.

Mēdni Rāi and other Rajput chiefs retired to their ancestral domains, leaving the incorrigible Sultan to his own devices. Mahmūd repaid Rāna Sanga's generosity by wantonly attacking his son, Ratan Singh, as soon as Bābur's great victory over the Rajputs in 1527 gave him an opportunity. But his crowning act of folly was to alienate the sympathy of his Musalman allies in Gujerat. This occurred in 1525, when Bahādur Shah, the son of Muzaffar Shah, succeeded to the throne of Ahmadābād. Mahmūd then lent his aid to the intrigues of a younger brother who had fled to Mandu for protection. Bahādur Shah thereupon marched into Mālwā. Mahmūd was soon forced to surrender, and was confined in the fortress of Champanīr, but being suspected of further intrigues was soon afterwards put to death. Mālwā was then annexed to the kingdom of Gujerat. Mēdni Rāi died while bravely defending his ancestral fortress, Chanderī, against the assaults of the Moguls under Humāyūn.

The great fortress of Mandu lives in Indian memory not so

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much for the events of the stormy period above narrated, but for a romantic episode later on in the sixteenth century when Bāz Bahādur, son of an Afghan governor appointed by Shēr Shah Sūr, had himself crowned as Sultan and for a time kept up a show of sovereignty. Bāz Bahādur was extremely fond of music, and enamoured of a beautiful Hindu songstress, Rūpmati, described by Muhammadan writers as the most lovely of India's womanhood ever seen. Her *beau cavalier* was, however, more successful in love than in war; for having led his army to the siege of the fortress of Garrah he was caught in an ambuscade prepared by the followers of the Rānī Dūrgāvati, the Hindu princess who ruled the country. His army was practically annihilated, though he himself succeeded in escaping alone to Sarangpur. The quondam Sultan then gave up military adventures and solaced himself by passing his time among the hills of Mālwā in the company of the fair musician, so that the loves of Bāz Bahādur and Rūpmati were sung by the local bards and became a favourite subject with Indian painters. One of the palaces at Mandu, with a beautiful prospect over the Narbadā valley, and a pavilion higher up the hill, are named by tradition after the two lovers.

In 1559 Akbar, hearing of the disordered state of the country, sent a Mogul army into Mālwā. Bāz Bahādur collected a small army and gallantly defended the remnant of his territory, but was defeated and compelled to take to the hills. The beautiful Rūpmati fell into the hands of the Mogul general, who would have forced her into his harem; but faithful to her old lover she took poison and died rather than yield to his threats and importunities. Bāz Bahādur, tired of guerrilla warfare and a precarious life in the forests and hills, at length made submission to Akbar and was given a command of two thousand horse. With the conquest of Gujerat Mālwā was absorbed in the Mogul Empire, and Mandu ceased to play any considerable part in Indian political history.

The history of Khāndēsh, a small Musalman kingdom in the extreme north of the Dekhan, formed by the lower part of the valley of the Tapti river and the districts of Berar, was

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associated with that of Gujerat and Mālwā. Like Mālwā the country was rich in monuments of Indo-Aryan civilisation and full of the memories of the long centuries before Muhammadan times. The record of the Arab, or Farūki, dynasty of Khāndēsh is chiefly interesting for the glimpse it gives of provincial life in a typical Indo-Aryan state. At the close of the fourteenth century Khāndēsh was a province of the Delhi Empire, administered by two brothers, Malik Nasīr Khan and Malik Iftikar, of the Farūki family, which claimed descent from the Khalif Omar. The former was the more energetic, and by unscrupulous diplomacy soon succeeded in ousting his brother from his possessions and in making himself independent by the aid of the neighbouring Muhammadan rulers who had already thrown off their allegiance to the Delhi Sultanate.

His first exploit as Governor had been to make himself master of the fort of Asirgarh, the hereditary castle of a Hindu chieftain, Asa Ahīr, in whose family it had remained for seven hundred years. Nasīr Khan was on very friendly terms with Asa Ahīr, who had been one of the first of the local chieftains to submit to the Musalman military authorities, and was universally respected for his charitable disposition and piety. Shortly before Nasīr Khan's assumption of office a great famine had raged in Khāndēsh, and Asa Ahīr had saved many lives by gratuitously distributing corn from his granaries and by employing many labourers in rebuilding the ancestral fort which gave protection to his own flocks and herds and the farms and homesteads of his retainers from the bands of robbers which infested the neighbouring forests. He was a wealthy man, possessed of five thousand buffaloes, five thousand cows, twenty thousand sheep, and a thousand mares.

Asa Ahīr's fort was strong, his influence in the neighbourhood was great, and he had two thousand well-armed yeomen devotedly attached to his service. Nasīr Khan coveted his neighbour's possessions, but hesitated to attack Asa Ahīr openly; though he might have fabricated an excuse for doing so, in spite of the obligations owed to him—for Nasīr had accepted many rich presents from the chieftain when he

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succeeded to the charge of the district. So Nasīr Khan prepared a cunning trap for the unsuspecting Hindu. He wrote a friendly letter to Asa saying that two neighbouring rājas had assembled large forces, and that he had suspicions of their intentions. The chief fort of the district, that of Talnir, was occupied by his own brother, Malik Iftikar. The other one was too near to the said rājas' territories to be a safe retreat. He therefore begged Asa to take his (Nasīr Khan's) family under the protection of his roof, while he himself prepared to resist the rājas' impending attack.

Asa gladly agreed to the proposal; he gave orders that suitable apartments should be prepared for the reception of the Governor's family, and that every respect should be paid to them. The next day several *dhūlis* came up the hill with the first arrivals of the expected guests—some Muhammadan ladies, who were installed in the apartments prepared for them and visited by Asa's wife and daughter. The day afterwards it was announced to the chieftain of Asirgarh that two hundred dhūlis, bearing the Governor's wife, mother, and the rest of the household, were approaching the castle. Asa ordered the gates to be thrown open, and accompanied by his sons he rode out to escort the party to their residence. But immediately after they had joined the procession the occupants of the dhūlis, who were some of Nasīr Khan's armed retainers, sprang out and, after cutting down Asa Ahīr and his sons, attacked and put to flight the chieftain's men-at-arms before they had time to recover from the panic which the murderous assault had caused.

Nasīr Khan as soon as he heard of the complete success of his dastardly plot proceeded to Asirgarh and began to strengthen the fortifications; but acting on the advice of the Shaikh Zein-ud-dīn of Daulatābād, his family's spiritual adviser, who came to congratulate him on "his success against the infidels,"[1] he did not establish a permanent residence there, but chose a site for a new town, unstained by foul murder, on the western bank of the Tapti. History does not record whether it was

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iv, p. 290.

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only superstition which prompted the Shaikh to give this advice, or whether the holy man was shocked when he heard the whole story of the outrage. But even Nasīr Khan seems to have felt some qualms of conscience, or fear of the vengeance of Asa Ahīr's spirit, for neither he nor his descendants made use of the money and jewels taken from Asirgarh. The property, it is said, fell intact into the hands of Akbar two centuries afterwards, when he took possession of Khāndēsh.[1]

Nasīr Khan was as ready to use a Hindu rāja as a tool against a Musalman enemy as he was to compass his destruction by foul means. He supported the Rāja of Jalwāra against the Sultan of Gujerat by persuading Ahmad Shah Bāhmani, his father-in-law, to send an army into the Gujerat territory. When this expedition ended disastrously he sought the assistance of the Sultans of Mālwā and Gujerat in stirring up trouble in his father-in-law's dominions. Finally this typical warlord of the realistic school was ignominiously defeated by 'Alā-ud-dīn, his son-in-law, commanding the army of the Dekhan, and died a few days afterwards. His reign lasted forty years.

The rest of the history of the Khāndēsh dynasty has no special interest. The Farūki Khans were generally tributary to the Sultans of Gujerat, with whom they were connected by marriage. They took part in the struggle with the Moguls, and the Khāndēsh dynasty survived the conquest of Gujerat by Akbar's armies. The last of the Khans, Bahādur Khan, was besieged in Asirgarh by Akbar, and held out until a pestilence among the garrison made further resistance futile. In 1599 Asa Ahīr's fortress with all its treasures came into the possession of the Great Mogul, and Nasīr Khan's descendant was conveyed as a State prisoner to Gwalior.

[1] The Musalman historian omits to mention, however, that it was a tradition with Indian kings not to use the treasure handed down to them by their predecessors, but to treat it as a reserve for times of great emergency.

NATIONAL PROJECT ON INDIA

CHAPTER VI

MARCO POLO

THE detailed accounts of Muhammadan writers, who are the principal authorities for the political history of India in the period we are reviewing, are supplemented by the observations of various European travellers regarding the internal state of the country and the manners and customs of the people. Apart from their information as to the economic state of the country, none of them have quite the same value as the illuminating memoirs of the Chinese pilgrims of the fifth and seventh centuries, though they are interesting as wholly detached criticism of foreign onlookers.

Marco Polo, who visited India in the latter part of the thirteenth century, describes the pearl fishery in, or adjoining, the Gulf of Manaar, practised then by the same methods as now. He is struck by the popular superstitions of the divers in using magic spells to exorcise the shark-demon infesting these waters, and notes the great revenue which the king drew from royalties on the proceeds of the fishery.

He then describes the province of Maabar, or the Coromandel coast districts, including what then remained of the Chola kingdom and the Rāja of Telingana's territory. His European sense of propriety was shocked by the aversion of the inhabitants of a tropical country to superfluous clothing—even the king went as bare as the rest, though he had a magnificent necklace of 104 [1] large pearls and rubies, a priceless heirloom upon which he told his daily prayers, while the jewellery he wore besides was worth more than a city's ransom! It is clear, therefore, that they had the means of dressing themselves more decently.

[1] Probably, as Sir Henry Yule suggests, an error for 108, which is the mystic number of a Vaishnava rosary.

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The king in that part of Southern India had about five hundred wives and many children. His person was guarded by a number of nobles or "trusty lieges," who when their sovereign died were bound by oath to accompany him to the other world by throwing themselves on the funeral pyre—a custom which Sir H. Yule observes was not peculiar to India. Marco Polo says nothing of the practice of *sati* by the king's wives, but he mentions that many women, when their husbands died, burned themselves along with the body, and won great praise for doing so.

The people were almost exclusively vegetarians: only Muhammadans and outcasts followed the butcher's trade. They mostly abstained from alcohol, and were careful to avoid contamination from the common use of drinking vessels. With regard to their own persons they were extremely cleanly, though Marco Polo thought it odd that they rubbed the mud floors and walls of their houses all over with cow-dung to keep them clean and free from vermin. The custom of sitting on the ground instead of on chairs was explained to him as the Indian way of doing reverence to Mother Earth. Every child's horoscope was taken at birth, and in after-life every action was influenced by a firm belief in astrology, "sorcery, magic, and geomancy, and suchlike diabolical arts." In this respect India did not differ much from Europe of the Middle Ages.

The people of Maabar, says Marco Polo, were born traders. Parents when their boys were thirteen years of age sent them out to earn their living as traders, giving them a small sum—twenty or thirty groats—to start with. The juvenile capitalists went about all day buying and selling, bringing home the food they earned for their mothers to cook, but not eating a scrap at their fathers' expense. At the time of the pearl fishery they ran to the beach, while the big merchants sheltered themselves in their houses from the hot sun, and bought from the fishermen a few pearls—five or six, according to their means. Then they brought the pearls to the merchants and sold them again at a profit—after the usual haggling. So

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they were trained " to be very dexterous and keen traders." [1] Evidently the Vaisyas of Southern India had a very practical system of commercial education, and as they had a great reputation for honesty and truthfulness it cannot be said that either East or West has advanced much in that direction since that time.

Marco Polo gives further particulars of the trading community of Southern India, and shows that in the thirteenth century the country still maintained its ancient reputation as one of the chief marts of Asia. He repeats fabulous stories of the famous diamond mines of Golconda and the methods by which the stones were collected. There were vast accumulations of wealth in the royal treasuries, for when the king died none of his successors touched the wealth he had stored up, but handed it on to their children. In the Telugu country were made the finest muslins and other costly fabrics: " In sooth they look like tissue of spider's web! There is no king nor queen in the world but might be glad to wear them. The people have also the largest sheep in the world, and great abundance of all the necessaries of life." [2] On the Malabar coast there was, as there had been from time immemorial, a great trade in pepper, ginger, and other spices, as well as dye-stuffs, such as indigo and Brazil wood. Merchants came from Southern China, Arabia, and the Levant to obtain cargoes of these commodities.

In Maabar a great part of the king's revenue went in the purchase of horses for military purposes, for the climate was unsuitable for horse-breeding and they were consequently all imported from Arabia and Persia by sea. Incidentally this observation throws light upon the great part which the horse played in Indian political history. From the time the Aryans entered the country the horse of the Kshatriya fighting men and the splendidly equipped war-car of their chieftains gave the Aryans an incontestable superiority over the Dravidians and other races in the long struggle for supremacy. But in

[1] Yule's *Travels of Marco Polo*, vol. ii, p. 344.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 361.

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India—especially in the south—the Aryan war-horse gradually deteriorated, and the elephant did not prove an efficient substitute for it; so that when the Central Asian tribes—expert bowmen mounted on their sturdy mares—poured down into the Indian plains the Indo-Aryan cavalry was outclassed and their armies were at the same disadvantage as their ancient antagonists had been. The Musalman war-lords monopolised the best horse-breeding grounds of Asia. The South Indian kings in the thirteenth century knew by experience the reasons for the enemy's superiority, and tried to make good their military deficiencies by a large importation of horses, but did not succeed in redressing the balance by this method.

Marco Polo had much to say of Indian merchants in Gujerat —those of the Vaisya caste who wore the sacred thread. He praised them as being the best and most truthful in the world. A foreign merchant could safely entrust his goods to them for sale, and they would "sell them in the most loyal manner, seeking zealously the profit of the foreigner and asking no commission except what he pleases to bestow."[1] But they were as superstitious as the rest of the people and regulated all their actions by the observation of signs and omens. No business could be done except on the day and hour they found propitious for it. They had a short and easy way of collecting debts which were overdue. The creditor when he met his debtor had only to draw a circle round him unawares, and the latter would not dare to pass outside of it without the creditor's leave for fear of the penalty of the law.[2] Marco Polo witnessed an incident in which a rāja who owed a foreign merchant a certain sum of money was thus compelled to satisfy the claim.

The Venetian traveller says nothing of the great struggle then going on between the Musalman and Hindu powers: all the countries he visited were under Hindu rule, and the invasion of the Dekhan by 'Alā-ud-dīn's armies did not begin until a few years afterwards. The western seas were infested

[1] Yule's *Marco Polo*, vol. ii, p. 363.

[2] Or, as Sir Henry Yule explains, for fear of the wrath of the deity invoked by the creditor when he drew the magic circle.

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with pirates, but Marco Polo does not speak of any difficulties in travelling by land. In Southern India there were five kings, brothers born of one father and mother, who were only restrained from continually fighting with each other by their widowed mother's influence. When she died, he said, they would most assuredly fall out and destroy one another. But one of them, at least, who ruled in the extreme south, administered his kingdom well and showed great favour to merchants and foreigners. Telingana had been ruled for forty years by a queen, "a lady of much discretion," who for the great love she bore her husband who reigned before her would not remarry. And during those forty years "she had administered her realm as well as ever her husband did, or better; and as she was a lover of justice, of equity and of peace, she was more beloved by those of her kingdom than ever Lady or Lord of theirs before." [1] Sir H. Yule identifies the queen to whom this fine tribute is paid with Rudrāmana Devi, the widow of Rudra Deva, the Rāja of Worangal, who had extended his kingdom to the east coast and up to the frontier of Orissa.

As a good Venetian citizen Marco Polo naturally writes with disgust and horror of the Eastern vikings who lived by the plunder of peaceful traders. But these Indian pirates seem to have set an example of magnanimity and discretion to others of the same profession in Europe, for instead of murdering men, women, and children, it was their custom to release the merchants they plundered, saying, "Go along with you and get more gain, and that mayhap will fall to us also!" Their scientific method of forcing their captives to surrender valuable pearls or precious stones they swallowed by administering a mixture of tamarind and sea-water, if unpleasant, was not inhuman. The Rāja of Tana provided his army with horses by legalising the system of piracy on the understanding that all horses captured should be considered as State property. Military necessity, as in modern times, was held to justify the State's condonation of piracy; though Marco Polo thought the practice "naughty and unworthy of a king." The urgent

[1] Yule's *Marco Polo*, vol. ii, p. 360.

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demand for horses for military purposes is evidenced by Marco Polo's statement that no ship ever went to India from the West without horses in addition to its other cargo.

Piracy was, however, kept within bounds by the maritime law of India and not allowed to encroach upon the fundamental rights of humanity. At the recognised ports of trade merchants were safe from the depredations of sea-rovers: only if their ships were driven out of their course by wind or weather and went ashore, or if they took refuge in an unknown harbour, they had to beware, for the seafaring population of the coast districts would regard them as lawful spoil—the gods they worshipped had sent them these riches, and they were the rightful owners. The merchants doubtless covered the risk by the prices they charged to their usual customers. The ethics of piracy sank to a much lower plane when, in Muhammadan times, sectarian and racial animosities were mixed up with them.

Marco Polo's observations on Indian religious practices were as superficial as those of the majority of Europeans. He ascribed popular superstitions common to all humanity to the particular forms of religious ritual adopted by Indians, and was unable to understand the symbolism which gave their image-worship its real spiritual significance. At the same time he was probably right in his judgment that some forms of Indian priestcraft were even more pernicious in their effect than similar perversions in Europe; though, like other Western onlookers, he was unable to understand the deep religious feeling which animated the Indian masses.

He describes the Brahmans of Gujerat as being devoted to their idols, and so strict that they would rather die than do what their Law pronounced to be a sin. They were very long-lived, owing, he said, to the use of a medicine compounded of sulphur and mercury. Some yogis went stark naked because, as they said, they had come naked into the world and desired nothing that was of this world. "Moreover," they declared, "we have no sin of the flesh to be conscious of, and therefore we are not ashamed of our nakedness, any more than you

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are to show your hand or your face. You who are conscious of the sins of the flesh do well to have shame and to cover your nakedness." [1] A similar line of argument explains why chaste women of the Malabar districts even at the present day often wear a minimum of clothing, or go without any, while prostitutes are particular in covering their persons.

There is a reminiscence of the temptation of the Buddha by Māra and his daughters in the rule observed by some of the monastic orders of Gujerat. Before a novice took the vow of the Order the monks sent for the nautch-girls from the neighbouring temple to dance before him and try his continence with their blandishments. "If he remains indifferent they retain him, but if he shows any emotion they expel him from their society. For they say they will have no man of loose desires among them." [2] Marco Polo also noticed the customs which the orthodox Jain community of Gujerat maintains to the present day. "They would not kill an animal on any account, not even a fly, or a flea, or a louse, or anything in fact that has life; for they say these have all souls, and it would be sin to do so." [3] For the same reason they ate no vegetables in a green state and spread their food only on dried leaves.

The Portuguese who entered into Indian politics two centuries after Marco Polo's visit were, as before stated, the first European nation to come into close contact with India since the time of Alexander; but their interests were purely mercenary, and their daring but unscrupulous enterprises only assisted the disintegration of Aryan India which the Muhammadan invasions began. It was not until the middle of the sixteenth century that the intellectuals of Portugal under the zealous leadership of St Francis Xavier began to follow up the noble-spirited work of the pioneers of Aryan civilisation in India, but their pious endeavours were ultimately frustrated by the corruption and demoralisation of the governing classes in Goa. The Vaisyas of the West, who had already begun to play a great

[1] Yule's *Marco Polo*, vol. ii, p. 366.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 366. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

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part in European politics, eventually gained the supreme control of all political relations between Europe and India, which they maintain to a great extent even in the present day. Indo-Aryan polity never showed greater wisdom than in making both military and commercial interests subject to the control of the highest intellectual forces of the State.

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CHAPTER VII

THE MOGUL INVASION

WE must now resume the political history of the central Muhammadan power in Northern India, which was broken off in a previous chapter with the death of Sultan Firuz Shah of Delhi at the venerable age of ninety. The state of tranquillity and comparative prosperity to which he had restored his dominions began to deteriorate when the infirmities of old age made him incapable of controlling the government, and his relatives began the usual contest for the succession, in which the Hindu rājas generally decided the issue between the different Musalman factions by the support they gave to one party or another. Firuz Shah's successor, a dissolute grandson, Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughlak II, was murdered after five months. Another grandson, Abubekr, shortly afterwards was deposed by the legitimate claimant to the throne, Nasīr-ud-dīn, a son of Firuz Shah. This Sultan died in 1394 after a reign of six and a half years. His son reigned forty-five days, and finally Mahmūd Tughlak, another son of Nasīr-ud-dīn, and a minor, was placed on the throne after violent disputes among the nobles, who assumed the control of the government during the minority of the Sultan.

It was in the midst of the disorders which followed these dynastic disputes that the governors of the different provinces of the Delhi Empire established themselves as independent rulers and Muhammadan India became as divided against itself as Āryāvarta had been at the time of the invasion of Mahmūd of Ghazni. The Mogul power in Central Asia, on the other hand, had been thoroughly organised and consolidated since the beginning of the thirteenth century by a succession of able war-lords who had been watching closely the course of

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political events in India, and from time to time trying the strength of their armies against the Muhammadan conquerors of the country. Throughout the same period the Moguls had been gradually acquiring a foothold in India in the service of Muhammadan sultans, who were glad to enlist these well-mounted bowmen in their armies as converts to the cause of Islam. By the end of the fourteenth century the Moguls, both in India and in Central Asia, had settled their somewhat dubious religious standing by openly professing the Muslim faith, and their great war-lord, Timūr or Tamerlane, posed as the champion of Islam by right of birth, for he claimed descent from the Khalif Ali ibn Abu Talib. In reality Timūr was a Turk, but for political reasons his court genealogists gave him a pedigree which made him a pure Mongol and a descendant of Chīnghiz Khan.

In 1398 Timūr, thirsting for an opportunity to distinguish himself as a *ghāzī*, or slayer of infidels, found the time ripe for another invasion of India, conveniently ignoring the fact that the greater part of Hindustan was then under Musalman rule. He first sought an omen from the Qurān, and found it in the verse: "O Prophet, make war upon infidels and unbelievers and treat them with severity." Then, calling a council of war at Samarkand, he put it to his generals and other counsellors whether he should invade Hindustan or China, at the same time suggesting to them that the Divine decree made it incumbent upon him to choose the former alternative.

Some of his generals demurred, pointing out the great strength of the 'four defences' of India. Others declared that as Sultan Mahmūd had conquered Hindustan (*sic*) with 30,000 horse, the Great Sultan Timūr, who had 100,000 valiant Tartars waiting at his stirrup, was certain of the favour of Almighty God if he gave orders for the expedition. One of the nobles pleased Timūr greatly by pointing out that the conqueror of India became the Lord Paramount of the earth. Another one drew attention to the prospect of rich booty. "The whole country of India," he said, "is full of gold and jewels, and in it are seventeen mines of gold and silver, diamond and ruby

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and emerald and tin and iron and steel [*sic*] and copper and quicksilver, etc., and of the plants which grow there are those fit for making wearing apparel, and aromatic plants, and the sugar-cane, and it is a country which is always green and verdant, and the whole aspect of the country is pleasant and delightful. Now, since the inhabitants are chiefly polytheists and infidels and idolaters and worshippers of the sun, by the order of God and His Prophet it is right for us to conquer them." [1]

Then the probable revenue of India was discussed. The financial experts estimated it at six *arbs* or 600 *krors* of *miskals* of silver. Some of the nobles protested against any project for the permanent conquest of India, for "if we establish ourselves permanently therein our race will degenerate and our children will become like the natives of those regions, and in a few generations their strength and valour will diminish." Timūr, seeing that these words made a deep impression upon the council, declared that his sole object was to lead an expedition against the infidels so that they (the Moguls) might convert to the true faith the people of that country, destroy their temples and idols, and win the reward which God bestowed upon *ghāzīs* and *mujāhids*. The great war-lord's protestation did not seem to satisfy the council entirely, so Timūr called in the doctors of Islam and appealed to them for their opinion. They unhesitatingly declared that it was the duty of the Sultan of Islam and all the people of the true faith "to exert their utmost endeavour for the suppression of the enemies of their faith." This apostolic pronouncement brought the waverers round to Timūr's views; all the nobles declared for a holy war in Hindustan, and "throwing themselves on their knees they repeated the Chapter of Victory." [2]

The great war council then dissolved. Some doubts have been thrown upon the authenticity of Timūr's memoirs in which this account is given, but whether the words are Timūr's or not, the main statements have a genuine ring and may be accepted as substantially correct. Timūr immediately began to mobilise his army. The wily Turk, in fact, some time before

[1] *Malfūzāt-i Tīmūrī*, Elliot, vol. iii, pp. 396–397. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 397.

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had instructed his grandson, Pīr Muhammad, who was Governor of Kabul, to watch the political situation in India and seek for a suitable *casus belli*—never a matter of great difficulty for war-lords, ancient or modern; but as the Sultan of Delhi was an orthodox Musalman, as Timūr himself professed to be, there were conscientious scruples which had to be satisfied. The distracted state of Hindustan during the minority of Mahmūd Tughlak gave Timūr's dutiful grandson the exact opportunity he wanted. One of Mahmūd's guardians, Sarang Khan, had established himself at Multān as an independent ruler. Pīr Muhammad, as Timūr's deputy, wrote a letter to Sarang Khan to the effect that the Great Sultan, his master, whose fame as a world-conqueror had doubtless reached the ears of the Governor of Multān, had ordered that "if the rulers of Hindustan come before me with tribute I will not interfere with their lives, property, or kingdoms; but if they are negligent in proffering obedience and submission, I will put forth my strength for the conquest of the kingdoms of India." [1]

Sarang Khan received Pīr Muhammad's envoy courteously, but sent him back with the answer that if Timūr desired to take that kingdom with its rich revenue he must do it by force of arms. Pīr Muhammad immediately proceeded to cross the Indus by a bridge of boats, captured the fortress of Utch, and then laid siege to Multān, but found it too strong to take by assault, so he wrote to his grandfather for instructions. Timūr, putting his foot in the stirrup at a lucky moment—for in these matters the orthodox Musalman was as superstitious as the idolater—left Samarkand in the spring of 1398, crossed the passes of the Hindu Kush, and marched *via* Kabul to Dīnkōt on the Indus, which he reached in the third week of September. In two days his engineers had constructed a bridge of boats, and Timūr, having crossed over without opposition, proceeded through desert country to the Jhīlam river. Here the Moguls took some time to capture a strong position on an island defended by a detachment of the Delhi army under the command of Shahāb-ud-dīn. Having made sure of his com-

[1] *Malfūzāt-i Timūrī*, Elliot, vol. iii, pp. 398–399.

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27. Timūr Enthroned, attended by Tributary Chieftains

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munications with the thoroughness upon which Timūr prided himself by a general massacre of the inhabitants of the island, the Moguls marched southward along the Chenab river to its confluence with the Rāvi, near which the town and fortress of Tulamba were situated. Here Timūr gazed with admiration upon the conflict of the rushing waters where the two great rivers met, for there was in his character, as in that of his descendants, that combination of childlike delight in the beauties of nature and unmitigated ferocity which distinguishes the primitive savage. Then with the keen eye of a soldier he looked at the fortress on the other side and decided that a bridge must be built for his army to cross the river. The local zamindars and chiefs represented that it was impossible to build a bridge over such a strong and turbulent flood, for previous Mogul war-lords had failed in the attempt. Nevertheless in six days the engineers of Timūr's army had achieved the impossible, partly by driving piles into the river-bed and partly by collecting a great number of boats and connecting them with chains and rope-cables. When Timūr and his troops had crossed in safety they marched forward and encamped on the plain close to the fortress. The chief Muhammadans of Tulamba then came out and made their submission, and Timūr, having "filled their hearts with joy and triumph by presents of costly dresses of honour and Arab horses," fixed the ransom of the people of the town at two lacs of rupees, exempting the Sayyids, the descendants of the Prophet, and the 'Ulamās, the synod of Islamic law and doctrine. Owing, however, to the scarcity of provisions, the rapacious Mogul soldiery were not to be restrained from plundering the town, and in the tumult which ensued the inhabitants were slaughtered without mercy. Timūr easily found an excuse for ravaging the surrounding country and for butchering some thousands more. He then satisfied his faithful followers' greed by distributing the spoils among them.

In the meantime his grandson, Pīr Muhammad, had succeeded in taking Multān; but in the rainy season which followed most of his horses died and he was in his turn besieged

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by the neighbouring zamindars and chieftains. But on the approach of Timūr's army the siege was raised and Pīr Muhammad hastened to join his grandfather. Timūr, who without wasting time in reducing the fort of Tulamba had attacked and dispersed a small force of tribesmen who opposed him, and captured large stores of grain in the flourishing villages of the district, was now encamped on the banks of the Biās river. He manifested his warm approval of his grandson's conduct, and furnished him with 30,000 horses to make up for the losses his army had suffered. Timūr then pushed on towards Multān and encamped in the vicinity of the city for four days, while Pīr Muhammad entertained him at a sumptuous banquet and presented him with magnificent gifts, including tiaras, priceless jewels, splendidly embroidered cloths, Arab horses, with housings set with gold and precious stones, and gold and silver vessels in such quantities that the scribes of the Sultan's retinue took two days to make an inventory of them. All these treasures Timūr distributed among the amīrs and others of his retinue.

Proceeding rapidly towards Delhi, Timūr was detained for some time by the siege of Bhatnir, a Rajput stronghold in the defence of which Muhammadans and Hindus fought side by side and perished together in the *jauhār* which terminated the struggle. The Moguls were so exasperated by the losses they suffered that they slaughtered every one left in the town and fortress, and, after piling up a ghastly pyramid of 10,000 heads, set fire to the houses and razed the fortress to the ground. The next town on the line of the Mogul march, called Sāmāna, shared the same fate, only the women and children were spared to become the slaves of the true believers. On approaching the vicinity of Delhi several detachments of the Mogul horse which had been sent out to plunder and slaughter the infidels rejoined the main body, and Timūr found himself seriously encumbered by a vast number of prisoners in addition to other booty. Besides women and children there were, no doubt, a great number of Hindu craftsmen, who were always regarded as too useful as slaves of the faithful to be sent to perdition

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prematurely. The amīrs represented to Timūr that the prisoners might become a source of danger in the decisive battle now impending, if they were left in the rear with the baggage. Moreover, these infidels had shown unmistakable signs of joy on the previous day when the enemy had made an attack. It was against all the rules of war to set them free, and it was too great a military risk to detach a sufficiently strong force to guard them.

Timūr agreed that military necessity is above all laws, human and divine, and gave orders that every man who had infidel prisoners over the age of fifteen should put them to death. The order was promptly obeyed, and Timūr noted with satisfaction that 100,000 impious idolaters were on that day slain. And so zealous were the faithful in fulfilling their duty that even non-combatants joined in the massacre. "Maulānā Nasīr-ud-dīn 'Umar, a counsellor and man of learning, who in all his life had never killed a sparrow, now in execution of my order slew with his sword fifteen idolatrous Hindus who were his captives."[1] Another Muhammadan historian translated by Elliot[2] would lead one to suppose that the women were spared, but Timūr in his memoirs is made to say that "after the *whole* of the vile idolaters had been sent to hell, I gave orders that one out of every ten should be told off to guard the property and cattle and horses."

Up to this time Sultan Mahmūd's generals had made no serious attempt to oppose the Mogul host. A body of 5000 cavalry had been sent out from Delhi to reconnoitre; but after an unsuccessful encounter had revealed the great strength of the enemy it was thought better to await an attack under the walls of the fortress. Though the Moguls had a great numerical superiority, rumours of the terrific strength and size of Indian war-elephants had caused some alarm in their ranks, and before the Jumna was crossed the court astrologers counselled delay, as the stars were not altogether propitious. Timūr, however, after reviewing the military

[1] *Malfūzāt-i Tīmūrī*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 436.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 497.

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situation, was of a different opinion, and knowing as well as modern war-lords how to use religious fanaticism in the strategy of war he turned to the Qurān for a *fāl*, or omen, in the sacred text. A verse in the chapter of the Bee satisfied himself and his retinue and discomfited the astrologers, so the Mogul army crossed the Jumna and entrenched on the other side, near Firuzābād. Always full of resource, Timūr had provided his infantry with a contrivance of spiked iron, ordering them to throw them on the ground in front of the elephants.

The next day, early in January 1399, the decisive battle took place. Mahmūd of Delhi and his general Mallū Khan marched out with 10,000 horsemen, 40,000 infantry, and 125 war-elephants covered with armour, carrying in their howdahs crossbowmen and disc-throwers. Grenade-throwers and rocket-men marched by the elephants' sides. The vanguard unfortunately fell into a Mogul ambush and was quickly routed, while the well-mounted Central Asian bowmen met the charge of Mahmūd's centre with showers of arrows, which brought the elephant-drivers to the ground, and then attacked the elephants resolutely, hacking at their trunks with their swords. Mahmūd's soldiers also fought valiantly, but they were badly led and in horsemanship were no match for their agile opponents. The maddened elephants turned tail and threw their ranks into confusion, and finally the whole army took to flight. Sultan Mahmūd and Mallū Khan escaped with difficulty and shut themselves up in the fortress. Timūr received the congratulations of the imperial princes with tears in his eyes, and casting himself upon the ground he poured out thanks to Almighty God Who had shown such signal favour to His faithful worshippers by this great and glorious victory.

Soon afterwards the Mogul army entered Delhi in triumph, the Sultan having fled to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy. Timūr's first days in Delhi were spent in court ceremonials and festivities. He had all the State elephants, 120 in number, and several rhinoceroses paraded before him, and amused himself vastly by watching the tricks they performed. To advertise his triumph he ordered that some of

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them should be sent to the principal towns of his empire, Samarkand, Tabriz, Shiraz, Herat, Sharwan, and Azurbaijān. Timūr's name was proclaimed in all the mosques of the city as Sultan of Hindustan, and at a great State function he bestowed honours and lavished presents upon the members of his family, the amīrs, and other high officers who had distinguished themselves in the campaign. While these festivities were going on Timūr's revenue officials had been busy collecting a heavy fine which had been imposed upon the city, and the Turkish and Mogul soldiery were amusing themselves in their own way at the expense of the infidels. A great crowd of Hindus from the suburbs had poured into the city with their goods and chattels to escape the marauders outside, and these were considered fair game for Timūr's soldiery. Timūr takes some pains to explain the events which followed, but students of modern history will find such explanation superfluous. When he issued orders that these Hindu refugees should be arrested there was some resistance to the military, and "the savage Turks [Timūr's countrymen] fell to killing and plundering. The Hindus set fire to their houses with their own hands, burned their wives and children in them, and rushed into the fight and were killed."[1] For a day and a night 15,000 Turks were engaged in slaying, plundering, and destroying. Then the rest of the Mogul army joined in, and for two days more the massacre and plunder continued. Each man took from twenty to a hundred infidels as slaves, and the other booty was immense. The gold and silver ornaments of the Hindu women were taken in such quantities as to exceed all account. Only the quarter where the Sayyids, the 'Ulamās, and other Musalmans resided was spared.

When the slaughter was over Timūr heard that some Hindus had taken refuge in the mosque of Old Delhi and were prepared to defend themselves. Such an outrage was not to be excused. He immediately gave orders that the house of God should be cleared of idolaters and unbelievers. This was at once done, and Old Delhi was then given up to rapine and massacre.

[1] *Malfūzāt-i Tīmūrī*, Elliot, vol. iii, p. 446.

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It was, Timūr piously observed, the will of God. It had been his earnest wish that no evil should befall his new subjects; but God had willed it otherwise and inspired them with a spirit of resistance to military orders. Timūr's memoirs in almost every line might be read as modern European history.

Besides drawing a striking portrait of himself, Timūr also throws light upon the methods by which he and his descendants have won the credit of being the great architects of India, as the creators of the 'Mogul style.' When the massacre was over and the captives had been counted, he ordered that all the artisans and skilled mechanics who were masters of their respective crafts should be picked out from among the prisoners and set aside. Accordingly some thousands of craftsmen were selected to await the Sultan's commands. The master-builders and masons were retained for the imperial service, for Timūr, following the example of Mahmūd of Ghazni, had resolved to build a great mosque in his capital, Samarkand, which should be without a rival in the world. The rest of the craftsmen were distributed among the imperial princes, the amīrs, and others holding official positions in different parts of Western Asia. So the 'Mogul style' and the 'Pathān style' were both the product of Indo-Aryan culture by adaptation to a new environment and new technical conditions. Both are directly related to the temples and palaces of Hindu India, to the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana, Sakūntala, and other creations of Hindu genius. They are only Mogul and Pathān in the same sense as St Sophia of Constantinople is Turkish. The Turks plundered the intellectual riches of Asia, but never increased them by the fruit of their own intellect. Like the Dravidians they civilised themselves by mixture with Aryan blood and by adopting Aryan culture; but the Turk of *sang pur* has remained a savage to the present day—though like many other savages he may have charming qualities, exhibited at their best when he is not on the war-path.

Timūr remained in Delhi only fifteen days, and then, having appointed an Indian Muhammadan, Khizr Khan, as his viceroy —no doubt because none of his sons or nobles cared to under-

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take the ungrateful task—he took his departure, ostensibly to fulfil his duty of waging war against the infidels of Hindustan. The real reason was that famine and pestilence began to appear in the countryside devastated by the Mogul army, which made his situation precarious; while his followers, glutted with plunder and bloodshed, were anxious to return to their homes before the hot season set in. Pīr Muhammad's losses at Multān warned Timūr against the risks to which his precious horses were liable in the Indian plains. Moreover, Timūr himself was sixty-three years old and suffered from rheumatism. So, after gathering more plunder by following the Ganges up to Hardwar, and by a raid into Kashmīr, he returned to Samarkand *via* Lahore and Kabul.

He died in 1405, about five years after his return, and was buried in a splendid mausoleum built by his captive craftsmen. The long inscription on the 'world-conqueror's' tomb makes not the slightest allusion to his achievements as a war-lord, but is most careful to give his full pedigree, tracing his descent first from Chīnghiz Khan and then from the amīr Bodzontschar. The latter had no father, according to the Mogul genealogists, but was the youngest of three sons miraculously conceived by Alongoa, the widow of a Mongolian prince. It follows, therefore, so runs the inscription, that Timūr was descended from the Khalif Ali ibn Abu Talib. "Alongoa's glorious sons have often confirmed this statement concerning him." The pedigree is as fictitious as the history of Western writers which makes Turks, Afghans, and Moguls the greatest artists and architects of India.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE FOUNDING OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE

FOR two months after the Mogul army had left it famine and pestilence raged around Delhi, and the stricken city had no rulers and hardly any inhabitants. Timūr's viceroy, Khizr Khan, retired to Multān. Mahmūd Tughlak had taken refuge in Gujerat and had no inclination to reassert his right to the sovereignty of Delhi. The two first competitors of the old *régime* who came forward were Nasrat Shah, a grandson of Firuz Shah, and Ekbal Khan, a brother of the former Governor of Multān, Sarang, who had taken the principal part in the government during Mahmūd's minority and now acted ostensibly on behalf of his former sovereign. Ekbal having proved himself the stronger in the field invited Mahmūd to return to Delhi.

The latter was glad to leave his somewhat ignominious position as a refugee in Gujerat, but soon found his situation in his former capital under Ekbal's protection equally intolerable. So when Ekbal marched against Ibrāhīm Shah of Jaunpur in the hope of recovering that province, Mahmūd, who accompanied him, went over to the Sharkī camp, naïvely expecting that the Shah would receive him with open arms and acknowledge him as his lawful sovereign. Ibrāhīm refused to receive him, and Mahmūd retired in disgust to Kanauj, then a part of the Jaunpur territory. Here he was permitted to remain for a time without interference either from Ekbal or Ibrāhīm. But about two years afterwards Ekbal unsuccessfully besieged the place, and then turned his arms against Khizr Khan, who hitherto had remained passive at Multān. In the battle which ensued Ekbal was killed. Mahmūd was

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then invited by the officers in command at Delhi to resume his throne. This was in 1405, the year of Timūr's death. Before Mahmūd's death in 1412 he was twice besieged in his capital by Khizr Khan, and had disgusted all his partisans by his incapacity and pusillanimity. Thus ingloriously ended the Turki slave dynasty which had ruled at Delhi for nearly a century.

In 1414, fifteen months after Mahmūd's death, Khizr Khan had established himself again at Delhi, nominally as the Mogul viceroy, for the terror of Timūr's invasion had not passed away. He claimed to be a Sayyid, or descendant of the Prophet, and was much respected on that account and as a just and benevolent ruler. But the Sayyid dynasty which he founded played an inconspicuous part in the politics of Northern India during the thirty-six years it lasted. The Delhi Sultanate had lost its prestige and had been shorn of its fairest provinces. At times it was reduced to the districts in the immediate neighbourhood of the city, and besides resisting further incursions of Moguls it had to maintain itself both against Hindu enemies and against the attacks of the numerous independent Musalman kingdoms of Hindustan—Gujerat, Mālwā, Jaunpur, Gaur, and others. By the middle of the fifteenth century the Panjab had come into the possession of the Afghans under a powerful chieftain, Behlōl Lodī, in whose favour Sayyid Muhammad abdicated in 1450. Delhi in this way recovered the Panjab, and Behlōl Lodi increased his dominions, with the help of some 20,000 Mogul mercenaries, by the conquest of Jaunpur, after a war lasting twenty-six years, which ended in Husain Shah, the last of the Sharkī line, being forced to take refuge at Gaur.

Sikandar, the second of the Lodi line (1488–1517), did something to restore the prestige of the Delhi Sultanate by capable administration and successful warfare. He was distinguished as a zealous Musalman and a just ruler, except in religious matters, for he supported the bigoted Afghan Sunnis in reviving the bitter feuds between Musalman and Hindu. We have already noticed the general tendency among Indian Muham-

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madans of the fifteenth century towards a better understanding with their Hindu neighbours in religious questions—a movement strongly supported by Husain Shah and other Musalman rulers, and encouraged by Hindu teachers such as Kabīr, Chaitānya, and Rāmanand. Sikandar Lodi set his face against any compromise with the infidel. A Brahman named Būdhan, probably a follower of Kabīr, who had aroused much discussion by maintaining that "the religions both of the Muslims and Hindus, if acted on with sincerity, were equally acceptable to God," was summoned to appear at the Sultan's court and defend his thesis before an inquisition of the 'Ulamās. After hearing the infidel's arguments the learned men all agreed that unless he renounced his errors and embraced the Muhammadan faith he should be put to death. The Sultan confirmed the decision, and Būdhan was accordingly executed as he refused to accept life on such terms. Before dissolving the court the Sultan showed his satisfaction with the result by bestowing suitable presents upon the judges.[1] Būdhan seems, however, to have found some influential official supporters; among them Ahmad Khan, son of the Afghan Governor of Lucknow, and one of the Lodi clan. He was dismissed from office and imprisoned. The Jesuit priests of Goa soon afterwards followed Sikandar Lodi's example by setting up an Inquisition, with all its accompanying horrors, among the native Christian community, the effect being a general stampede of Indians from the Portuguese colony, and a decided set-back to the cause of Christianity.

Sikandar Lodi not only made a point of destroying Hindu temples, but in the city of Mathurā he had mosques and Muhammadan bazars built opposite to the bathing ghats, and ordered that no Hindus should be allowed to bathe there. This arbitrary proceeding evoked a protest from a pious Musalman, who addressed the Sultan in the public audience hall and declared that it was unlawful for a king to interfere with the religion of his subjects and prevent them from bathing at the places to which they had been accustomed to resort for

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 577.

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ages. "Wretch," cried the Sultan, drawing his sword, "do you maintain the truth of the Hindu religion?" "By no means," replied the brave man; "I speak according to the law. Kings should not persecute their subjects on any account." This answer, says Ferishta, pacified the Sultan, leaving his readers to infer that the rebuke was not unavailing.

Apart from his narrow religious views Sikandar Lodi seems to have been an estimable monarch with a high sense of justice. He gave encouragement to learning, especially among the officers of his army, so that most of them were well-educated men, and "the profession of arms assumed a new character." [1] His Hindu subjects also, says his biographer, began to learn Persian and to study Muhammadan literature. He died in 1517, after a reign of twenty-eight years, and was buried at Sikandra, the place named after him, near Agra, afterwards the resting-place of Akbar.

The reign of Ibrāhīm Lodi, his son and successor, is only distinguished for the opportunity it gave to the Moguls under Bābur to effect the permanent conquest of Hindustan. He gave mortal offence to all the chiefs of the Lodi clan by withdrawing the privilege granted them in the two previous reigns of sitting in the presence of the Sultan, instead of standing with their hands crossed before them. In consequence they conspired to place his brother, Jalāl Khan, on the throne of Jaunpur, leaving Ibrāhīm only Delhi and a few of the surrounding districts. The plot failed, and Jalāl Khan was eventually seized and put to death; but the disaffection of the Lodi chieftains was kept alive by Ibrāhīm's treacherous and arbitrary conduct, and finally Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of Lahore, rebelled and sent an invitation to Bābur, who had by that time won the kingdom of Kabul, to reassert his right to the sovereignty of Delhi derived from his grandfather, Timūr.

Bābur, who had already made several attempts to invade India, was nothing loth, but knowing the Afghan character and having good reason to suspect a trick, he first determined to make his communications secure by a conquest of the

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. i, p. 587.

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Panjab. In this enterprise he succeeded completely, though Daulat Khan's shiftiness more than justified Bābur's cautious attitude. Bābur then sent 'Alā-ud-dīn, Ibrāhīm's uncle, who had escaped from prison and taken refuge in the Mogul camp, with an army to attack Delhi, while he himself remained in Kabul to keep his unruly Afghan subjects in order. 'Alā-ud-dīn was completely defeated under the walls of Delhi and retreated to the Panjab. Then Bābur determined to take the business in hand himself. In December 1525 he crossed the Indus with a strong force of artillery, but only 10,000 picked horsemen.

Daulat Khan, who now sided with the Sultan of Delhi, had collected an army of 40,000 men to oppose the Moguls, but on Bābur's approach he shut himself up in the fortress of Milwat and surrendered after a few days' siege. Bābur, whose genius showed itself as much in his shrewd diplomacy as in his brilliant success in war, overlooked the chieftain's double-dealing and conciliated the Afghans by restraining the marauding propensities of his Mogul troops, thus saving Daulat Khan's household from molestation, and a fine library collected by his son from destruction. As Bābur marched towards Delhi the dissensions among Ibrāhīm Lodi's Afghan followers continued, one of the chieftains coming out to join the Mogul army with 3000 horse, but when the two armies faced each other on the historic field of Pānipat, in April 1526, Ibrāhīm could still muster nearly ten times Bābur's little army of about 12,000 horse. Bābur, however, had the superiority in artillery, and by long experience in war he had made his military machine the most perfect in Asia. Ibrāhīm was young and inexperienced, and had made the fatal mistake of despising his enemy. "He was," says Bābur, "negligent in all his movements; he marched without order, retired or halted without plan, and engaged in battle without foresight."

Bābur, on the other hand, neglected no precautions which his military experience and skill suggested. For six days before the battle he was engaged in organising his artillery and strengthening his position by linking the guns together

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with leather ropes made of raw hides, "according to the practice of the Turkish armies in Asia Minor." He entrenched himself so strongly that one of his officers suggested that the enemy would never dream of attacking him there. "You judge of him," replied Bābur, "by the khans and sultans of the Uzbeks. . . . But you must not judge of our present enemies by those who were then opposed to us. They have not the ability to discriminate when it is proper to advance and when to retreat." Bābur's intuition was correct. Ibrāhīm's great host came on impetuously in a solid phalanx with the intention of carrying the Mogul position by sheer weight of numbers. Bābur marshalled his horsemen in two lines, composed of four divisions with a few light troops thrown out in advance and with strong reserves in the rear of each, and having carefully instructed his generals took up his position in the centre of the first line.

Ibrāhīm began the battle by a great charge of cavalry, which was met by Bābur's artillery and archers so steadily that it failed to break the first Mogul line. When the Afghans began to retreat they found themselves surrounded, for Bābur at the critical moment had ordered his reserves to wheel round the enemy's flanks and fall upon them in the rear—a manœuvre which succeeded perfectly. In the hand-to-hand *mêlée* which ensued Ibrāhīm and 5000 of his body-guard were slain, and the rest of the Delhi army completely routed with a loss estimated at 12,000 to 50,000 men. Bābur immediately followed up his decisive victory by sending a strong cavalry force under the command of his son Humāyūn to occupy Agra, while he himself pushed on to Delhi, which he entered on April 22, 1526, two days after the battle. The Khutba, or prayer for the sovereign ruler, was at once read in Bābur's name at the Great Mosque; but after inspecting the city and visiting the tombs of Muhammadan saints and heroes he joined Humāyūn before Agra, which was defended by the Rajput troops of the Rāja of Gwalior, who had shared the fate of Ibrāhīm on the field of Pānipat. The Rajputs, however, in a few days made terms with Bābur, and in gratitude for

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the protection afforded to them the Rāja's family presented to Humāyūn, as a *peshkesh*, or token of homage, a quantity of the State jewels, including a great diamond weighing eight *miṣkals*, or about 280 carats, which had formerly been in the possession of the Sultan 'Alā-ud-dīn of Mālwā. This stone is generally believed to have been the celebrated Koh-i-Nūr.

Thus Bābur, as he writes with pride in his memoirs, with an army hardly a tithe of the forces which Mahmūd of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghūri had commanded, obtained a permanent foothold in the heart of Hindustan and laid the foundation of the Mogul Empire in India. His success, however, was as much due to the weakness and hesitation of his opponents, caused by political dissensions in the camp of the Afghan ruler, as to his military genius. The events which followed the great victory of Pānipat will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

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CHAPTER IX

THE TURKISH DYNASTY OF BIJĀPŪR

WHILE two great Musalman dynasties were thus struggling for power in Northern India, another one in the southern part of the Dekhan, which had kept itself almost entirely aloof from the politics of Hindustan, continued the holy war against the infidels, who since the days of 'Alā-ud-dīn had set up a strong barrier against the further progress of the arms of Islam southward. About thirty-five years before Bābur crossed the Indus a Turkish dynasty was established at Bijāpūr by Yūsuf 'Adil Khan, an officer in the service of the Bāhmani Sultan Mahmūd Shah II. The latter was a weak and dissolute creature in the hands of Georgians, Circassians, Kalmuks, Turks, and Moguls, who formed his body-guard. The quarrels of these truculent swashbucklers and the weakness of their master soon ended the Bāhmani dynasty, and its territories were split up into a number of minor Musalman principalities, of which the Bijāpūr state was one. The latter, under the 'Adil Shāhi dynasty, quickly aggrandised itself, partly at the expense of its Muhammadan rivals, but chiefly by its final victory over the Vijayanagar dynasty, which at the beginning of Yūsuf 'Adil Shah's reign had maintained for two centuries Hindu power in Southern India.

The war with Vijayanagar was a continuation of a struggle, almost unexampled in its ferocity, which the Bāhmani Sultans had commenced. About the year 1371, Muhammad Shah Bāhmani I in a drunken revel at court had presented a band of musicians with a draft upon the treasury of Vijayanagar, sealed with his own seal, which he ordered to be despatched forthwith to the Rāja for payment. The latter on receipt of the insulting document had the messenger seated on an ass

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and sent back to Kulbarga, after having been subjected to the derision and contumely of the populace of Vijayanagar. He then marched his army into the Bāhmani Sultan's territory, captured the fortress of Mūdkal, and put the whole garrison to the sword, except one man who escaped to bring the news to Muhammad. The latter in a fit of fury ordered him to be executed for having dared to survive the death of his comrades. He then set out with 9000 chosen horse to wreak vengeance on the Rāja, having taken a solemn oath not to sheathe the sword until the blood of the 'martyrs' had been avenged by the slaughter of 100,000 infidels. So rapid was his march that the Vijayanagar army was taken by surprise and broke up, leaving the camp with its thousands of followers in the hands of the enemy. Muhammad's vow was partly fulfilled by the indiscriminate massacre of 70,000 men, women, and children. Soon afterwards the Sultan, having received reinforcements from Daulatābād, crossed the Tungabhadra river and invaded Vijayanagar territory. A desperate battle took place with great losses on both sides, but the day was won by the Musalmans when the Vijayanagar elephants turned on their own lines and the Hindu commander-in-chief fell mortally wounded. The Rāja, Krishna Rāi, was compelled to seek safety in flight, and the massacre of the unbelievers was renewed with relentless savagery under the Sultan's eyes.

The end of the campaign was that the Rāja was compelled by his own subjects to sue for peace in order to put an end to the horrid bloodshed. Muhammad Shah, though the death toll required for the fulfilment of his vow had been far exceeded, refused to listen to any overtures until the bill for the musicians drawn up in his drunken carouse had been paid. Krishna's ambassadors immediately paid the money, and Muhammad Shah gave thanks to God that his orders had been obeyed! Seeing that the Sultan was in a good humour the ambassadors then ventured to make an appeal in the name of humanity. No religion, they said, required that the innocent should suffer for the crimes of the guilty, more especially helpless women and children. If their master, the Rāja, had been in fault,

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his helpless subjects were not accessory to his errors. The Sultan replied with the stock phrase of such murderous warlords—that he had no power to alter God's decrees. The ambassadors represented that as God had bestowed upon the Sultan the government of the Dekhan it was probable that his successors and the Rājas of Vijayanagar would long remain neighbours, and that it was reasonable to avoid unnecessary cruelty in war. They therefore proposed that a treaty should be made between the two powers binding them not to slaughter helpless and unarmed inhabitants in future battles.

"Muhammad Shah," says Ferishta, "struck with the good sense of this proposal, took an oath that he would not hereafter put to death a single enemy after a victory, and would bind his successors to observe the same line of conduct." "From that time to this," he adds, "it has been the general custom in the Dekhan to spare the lives of prisoners in war, and not to shed the blood of an enemy's unarmed subjects." [1] Incidentally Ferishta mentions that this was the first campaign in the Dekhan in which artillery was used both by the Hindu and the Musalman armies. The *Sukrā-nitisāra*, however, which is certainly older than the fourteenth century, refers to the use of cannon and gunpowder.

Muhammad Shah's son, Mujāhid Shah Bāhmani, renewed the war with Krishna Rāi on account of boundary disputes, and Vijayanagar seems to have paid tribute to Kulbarga for some time afterwards, until Deva Rāja in 1398 felt himself strong enough to attack Firuz Shah Bāhmani. The war continued for many years. Sometimes Vijayanagar was invaded by the Muhammadan troops and Deva Rāja was glad to make peace by gratifying Firuz Shah's cosmopolitan taste in matrimony. In his harem, it is said, there were Arabians, Circassians, Georgians, Turks, Russians, and other Europeans, Chinese, Afghans, and Indians from Bengal, Gujerat, Telingana, and Mahārāshtra, and each lady fancied herself the most beloved.[2] At other times the Hindus overran the Dekhan

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. ii, p. 319.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

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and nearly succeeded in breaking the Muhammadan power there.

Similar conditions prevailed throughout the greater part of the fifteenth century, until the Bāhmani kingdom fell to pieces through the bestiality and licentiousness of its rulers, though the Muhammadan soldiery, probably on account of their better equipment, generally maintained a superiority over the Hindus in fighting capacity. The Vijayanagar Rājas recognised the fact by enlisting a number of Musalman cavalry and archers in their armies, and by endeavouring to bind them to loyal service by a scrupulous respect for their religious feelings and by rewarding them, according to Hindu custom, with grants of land. They lived in a separate quarter of Vijayanagar. The Rāja's master-builders built them a splendid mosque in which they could practise their own religious rites undisturbed, and the Qurān was brought into the royal court when the Muhammadan officers came to swear fealty to the Rāja. The Bijāpūr Sultans, equally impartial in the choice of military weapons, enlisted large numbers of Hindu cavalry from the Mahārāshtra country into their armies. In this respect the contest between Bijāpūr and Vijayanagar was a revival of the ancient feud between the Chola and Rāshtrakūta dynasties.

The conventional reading of the history of the Dekhan in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has always made political events circle round a contest of religious dogmas. Though the differences between Hindu and Musalman and between Sunni and Shiah acted as a fulcrum in the dynastic wars of the Dekhan and Southern India, and to a considerable extent determined the brutal character of the warfare, they had hardly more influence as the originating cause of war than sectarian disputes had in the wars between Pāndava and Chola, or Chola and Rāshtrakūta. Dynastic ambitions and racial animosities, then as now, were infinitely more active forces both in creating the war-machines of the rival powers and in setting them in motion. The Bijāpūr dynasty was a foreign one, boasting of its connection with the Ottoman Sultans of Constantinople. It was equally jealous of the

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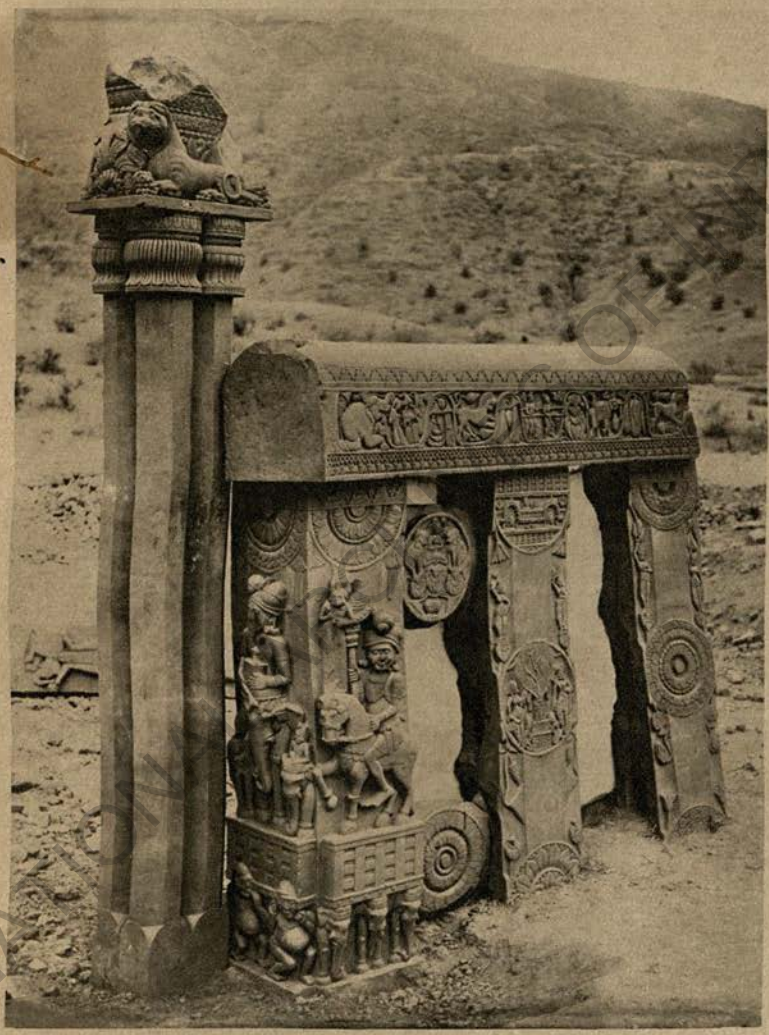

Bharhut Stupa., Eastern Gateway.

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Bāhmani Sultans of Arab descent at Kulbarga and Bīdar, of the Shahs of Ahmadnagar, who were of Brahman ancestry, and of the Hindu Rājas of Vijayanagar. When the Bijāpūr Sultans tried to crush their Musalman rivals at Ahmadnagar they invited the aid of the infidel Rāja of Vijayanagar. When the latter's war-machine became too powerful the Sunni and Shiah war-lords joined in smashing it. The quarrels between Sunni and Shiah were of a domestic character: they served to distinguish the chief factions at court, but had little influence on foreign politics.

Yūsuf 'Adil Shah (1490–1510), the first Sultan of Bijāpūr, was too much occupied with the intrigues at the court of Kulbarga, by which he had established his independence, to enter seriously into the contest with Vijayanagar, though he successfully opposed an incursion which Turima, the minister who acted as regent during the minority of the Rāja, made into his territory. He married the sister of a Mahratta chieftain, and was zealous in promoting the tenets of the Shiah sect, thus giving a double offence to his Turkish and Abyssinian officers, who were Sunnis and jealous of the favour shown to Indian Musalmans. But though he openly proclaimed his attachment to Shiah doctrines by altering the service at the royal mosque, he forbade the customary abuse of the Sunni faith to which Shiahs were addicted, and encouraged Christians and Muhammadans of both sects to live at peace with each other. "Holy teachers and pious recluses," says Ferishta, "were equally astonished at this well-regulated moderation, and attributed it to an almost miraculous ability in the wise king."[1] It was in his reign that the Portuguese established themselves at Goa.

Of Yūsuf 'Adil Shah's character and accomplishments his biographer writes: "He also was eminent for his learning, his liberality, and his valour. He wrote elegantly and was a good judge of poetical composition, and even sometimes wrote verses himself. His taste and skill in music were superior to those of most of the masters of his time, whom he encouraged

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iii, p. 29.

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by munificent rewards to attend his court: he himself performed to admiration on two or three instruments, and in his gay moments would sing improvisatore compositions.[1] Ferishta's history of the Bijāpūr dynasty is particularly valuable, as he lived at the Bijāpūr court in the reign of Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II (1579–1626), and writes with a sincerity not often found in court historians.

Ismail 'Adil Shah I, born of a Mahratta mother, succeeded to the Sultanate of Bijāpūr in 1510, but as he was a minor the administration was placed in the hands of Kumal Khan, a nobleman of the Bāhmani court who had espoused the cause of his father and had become Yūsuf's Prime Minister. Kumal Khan first made himself popular with the foreign faction at court by restoring the Sunni service in the royal mosque, and then, having enlisted a large number of Mahratta horsemen, began to intrigue with the officers to secure the throne for himself. Ismail's mother, Bābaji Khānam, knowing his treasonable designs, for she and the young Sultan were virtually prisoners in their own palace, took into her confidence the Sultan's foster-father, Yūsuf Turk, who had been grievously insulted by the regent and readily agreed to risk his life in getting rid of him. Kumal Khan had posted his own guards in the city and taken up his abode in the fort, close to the royal palace, waiting for the day which the conspirators believed to be propitious for carrying out the plot. In the meantime he feigned sickness and remained in his room.

Bābaji Khānam also pretended. Assuming deep anxiety for the regent's health, she called an old female attendant whom she knew to be Kumal Khan's spy, and giving her money for a 'wave-offering' for the regent's recovery sent her to make inquiries. Then, as if an afterthought had struck her, she called the old lady back and begged her to take Yūsuf Turk with her and prevail upon the regent, as a personal favour to the Sultan, to grant her old retainer leave to go on a pilgrimage to Mekka. Kumal Khan received the message in good faith and admitted Yūsuf Turk to his presence, but while he stretched

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iii, p. 30.

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out his hand to give the latter the customary *pān* he was stabbed to the heart by a dagger which Yūsuf had concealed under his coat. The assassin was immediately cut down by the regent's guards, who also killed Bābaji Khānam's messenger, thinking she was an accomplice in the murder.

Now the mother of Kumal Khan, not less resourceful than the Sultāna, came forward to play her part in the tragedy. She prevented the regent's attendants from raising a clamour, and to make believe that the regent was still alive had the corpse propped up with cushions on a *masnad* in the balcony of the palace overlooking the courtyard. Then she sent her grandson, Safdar Khan, with the regent's body-guard to surround the royal apartments, to seize Ismail and his mother, and to proclaim Kumal Khan as Sultan. Bābaji Khānam, supposing that Yūsuf Turk had failed in his attempt, was at first inclined to despair, but on the advice of Yūsuf's sister, Dilshad Agha, she determined on a desperate resistance. The palace gates were shut, and the Turkish guards in the outer courtyard of the seraglio obeyed the summons to rally round their royal master. The young Sultan came out, accompanied by the two ladies, with bows and arrows in their hands and clad as men-at-arms, to take part in the defence.

When Safdar Khan with his rebel guards hammered at the palace gates he was met with a shower of arrows from the walls. Dilshad Agha, who had previously despatched a messenger to rouse all the Sultan's partisans in the city, was the leading spirit of the defence. With a veil over her face she fought as valiantly as her fellow-countrymen, encouraging them with animating speeches and promises of reward. But the little garrison was greatly outnumbered and many fell under the musket-balls of the rebels. At last reinforcements began to arrive from the city and were helped over the walls by Dilshad Agha at a spot left unguarded by the besiegers. Safdar Khan perceiving this secured all the approaches to the palace, brought cannon to batter down the walls, and made a desperate assault with five hundred men. But as he was on the point of breaking into the courtyard he was pierced in the eye by

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an arrow, and Ismail broke his back with a heavy stone as he lay concealed under the terrace wall. The rebels seeing their leader killed rushed to the house of Kumal Khan, but finding to their dismay that he also was dead they opened the gates of the citadel and fled precipitately.

Ismail's first care when all danger was over was to bury with full honours the body of Yūsuf Turk. A fine mausoleum with a mosque attached was built over his remains, and so long as he lived the Sultan showed his gratitude by going once a month to pray over his foster-father's tomb. He rewarded Yusuf's relative, Khusru Turk, with the title of Asad Khan, and conferred upon him the district of Belgaum as a *jāgir*. Asad Khan afterwards became commander-in-chief and Ismail's most trusted counsellor. The Sultan's confidence was well placed, for Asad Khan's loyalty and military skill brought his rash and impetuous master out of many dangerous situations. Perhaps in consideration of the gallantry of his own womenfolk Ismail was equally generous to the late regent's mother. He allowed her and her family to leave his dominions in safety, and gave her a large sum of money for her maintenance.

For a long time after Ismail remained suspicious of Kumal Khan's Mahratta allies and only enlisted Turks and Moguls in his body-guard. Though he was himself an adherent of Shiah doctrines he was guided in this matter by political rather than religious motives. He recognised that the Sunni faction was a danger to his dynasty. He would not allow any Abyssinian or Indian-born soldiers in his army, but eventually relaxed the rule in favour of the children of foreigners born in India, Rajputs and Afghans. The constitution of the Bijāpūr army, says Ferishta, remained on this basis until the time of Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shah II.

While Ismail was thus struggling for his throne, Turima, the minister who had now subverted the ancient dynasty of Vijayanagar, took advantage of the situation at Bijāpūr to invade Ismail's territory and lay siege to Mūdkal and Raichor. Ismail was unable, for the time being, to prevent these fortresses from being taken, for he was too much occupied in watching

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the proceedings of his Musalman rivals in the Dekhan, especially the Amīr Berīd, who was now practically master of Kulbarga and had had a secret understanding with Kumal Khan in the latter's attempt to overthrow the Bijāpūr dynasty. During the time Bābur was engaged in the conquest of Hindustan Bijāpūr was thus the centre of the struggle for mastery in the Dekhan, the chief combatants being Ismail 'Adil Shah and his loyal minister, Asad Khan; Amīr Berīd, who shared with the Qutb Shāhi dynasty of Golconda the dismembered territories of the Bāhmani Sultans; and Turima and his son, who ruled at Vijayanagar. A fourth, who played an opportunist game, was Burhan Nizām Shah of Ahmadnagar: at different times he joined Amīr Berīd in attacking the Bijāpūr Sultan; allied himself with the latter and married his sister Miriam; fought with his brother-in-law on some domestic quarrel, and later on obtained assistance from him in repelling an invasion of the Gujeratis. It is noticeable that the brutality and viciousness which characterised the struggles of the two preceding centuries were generally conspicuous by their absence. Religious animosities seemed to have greatly diminished. We find a Brahman minister serving at the Musalman court of Ahmadnagar, and even acting as the confidential adviser of the Amīr Berīd, a professed champion of the Sunni sect.[1]

A touch of humour lights up the gloomy history of Musalman warfare in the description of Asad Khan's penetrating into Amīr Berīd's tent in the dead of night and carrying off the crafty old fox fast asleep in his camp cot, after a drunken revel; then sarcastically reproaching the "reverend old man," when he awoke with horrid dreams of djinns and black magic, for his intemperance and consoling him with promises of kind treatment. Nor did Ismail find it necessary to exact vengeance for Amīr Berīd's ingratitude and double-dealing after his release.

By the end of Ismail's reign Bijāpūr had become the chief power in the Dekhan. Mūdkal and Raichor had been recovered from the Hindus, though the armies of Vijayanagar still barred

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iii, pp. 57, 220.

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the way further south. Ismail had the reputation of being most humane in the administration of justice, averse from listening to slander, and fond of the company of learned men and poets. "He was adept in the arts of painting, varnishing, making arrows, and embroidering saddle-cloths. In music and poetry he excelled most of his age." [1] Like Firūz Shah of Delhi he probably inherited many of his fine personal qualities from his Indian mother, but he was well served by his foreign relatives and partisans.

Ismail's eldest son, Mallū 'Adil Shah, a thoroughly vicious youth, reigned only six months, and was then deposed at the instigation of his strong-minded grandmother, Bābaji Khānam, in favour of Ismail's youngest son, Ibrāhīm. Asad Khan remained in power, but serious differences soon arose between the young Sultan and his father's trusted minister. Ibrāhīm began by making many sweeping changes in the court and in the administration of his kingdom. His first act was to dismiss most of the Turkish and Mogul officers and men from the royal body-guard and replace them by Abyssinians and Dekhani soldiers, both Hindu and Musalman. Many of the Musalman foreigners thus discharged enlisted in the body-guard of Rāmrāj, the Rāja of Vijayanagar. Ibrāhīm would have none of the Persian fashions which Ismail had introduced at court. He restored the Sunni form of service in the royal mosque and ordered that the revenue accounts should be kept in Mahratti instead of Persian. In consequence of the latter change the Brahman accountants began to acquire considerable influence in the government of Bijāpūr—another indication that Islam in India was adapting itself to its environment, for the orthodox Sunnis had hitherto been known as the most violent opponents of the Brahmans. Even the veteran Asad Khan was ordered to dismiss his foreign retainers and to follow the Sunni ceremonies. He obeyed the first order, but refused to comply with the second, and Ibrāhīm was wise enough not to insist upon this demand.

The relations between Bijāpūr and Vijayanagar had so much

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. iii, p. 72.

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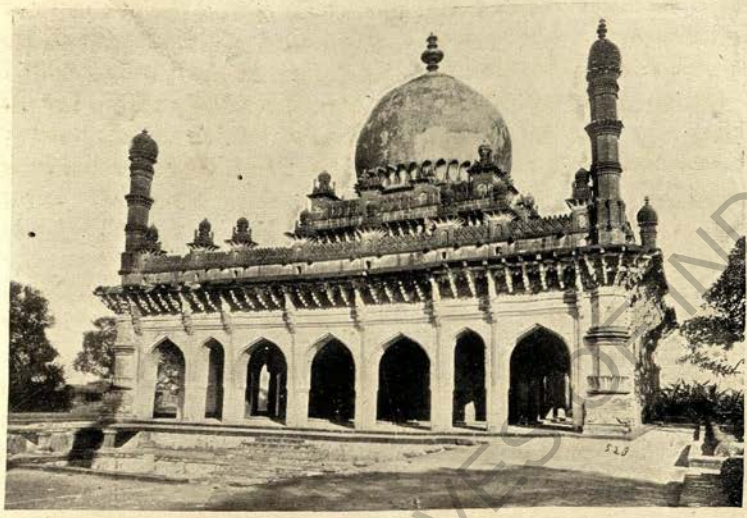
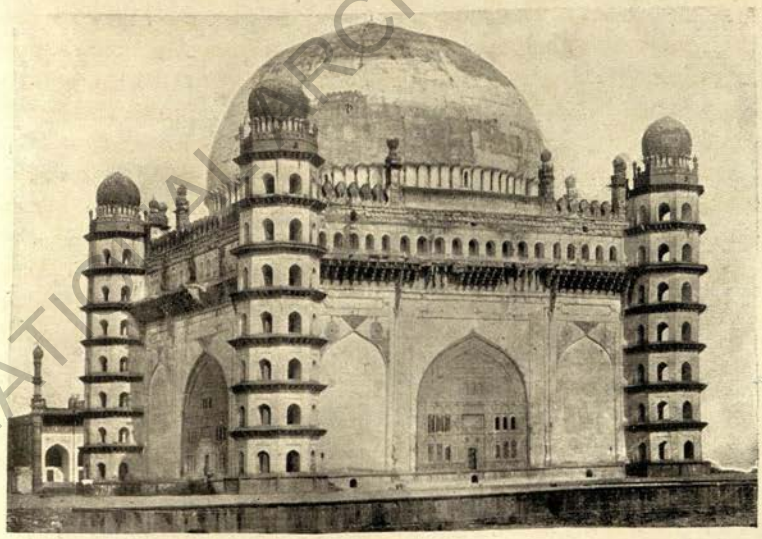


TOMB OF IBRĀHĪM 'ADIL SHAH II AT BIJĀPŪR



28. TOMB OF MUHAMMAD 'ADIL SHAH AT BIJĀPŪR 394

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improved that a year after his accession Ibrāhīm was invited to intervene in the internal affairs of the Hindu state, thrown into disorder by disputes regarding the succession to the throne. The rival claimants were Rāmrāj, the son of Turima, and Bhoj Tirumal Rāi, a representative of the former dynasty. The latter appealed to Ibrāhīm for assistance, in return for which he promised to acknowledge himself tributary to Bijāpūr and to pay a handsome sum for the expenses of the expeditionary force. Ibrāhīm, on the advice of Asad Khan, accepted the offer, and on arriving at Vijayanagar with his army was lavishly entertained by Tirumal Rāi. This betrayal of the interests of the State naturally strengthened the cause of Rāmrāj and made all the most powerful Hindu rājas rally round his standard. Tirumal Rāi committed suicide, and Ibrāhīm, shortly after his return from Vijayanagar, found himself involved in a war with Rāmrāj. This, however, was not of long duration, and after an indecisive battle the two belligerents came to terms.

The drastic changes which Ibrāhīm had made at his court encouraged the intriguers to stir up ill-blood between the Sultan and his faithful minister, with so much success that Asad Khan fearing for his life thought it prudent to retire to his Belgaum estates. The strained relations between the Sultan and his most able general soon became the common talk of the Dekhan, and Amīr Berīd, now ruling at Bīdar, and Burhan Nizām Shah of Ahmadnagar, Ibrāhīm's uncle, joined forces and marched to lay siege to Bijāpūr, partly with a view of wiping off old scores, and partly to win back certain districts round Sholapur which had been disputed territory for many years. On the way they passed through the jāgir of Asad Khan, who thought it politic to make a pretence of joining hands with them, but secretly despatched a trusted messenger to Ismail Shah of Berar, another of Ibrāhīm's uncles by marriage, asking him to come to his sovereign's aid. As soon as the Berar army moved to attack Kulbarga Asad Khan joined it and Bijāpūr was relieved. This signal proof of Asad Khan's loyalty brought about a reconciliation between him and

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Ibrāhīm, and peace between Bijāpūr and its northern rivals was hastened by the sudden death of Amīr Berīd. Foiled in his plans by this turn of events, the Shah of Ahmadnagar now formed an alliance with the Rāja of Vijayanagar and the Shah of Golconda. Ibrāhīm was now attacked from the north, south, and east. In this predicament he again sought counsel with Asad Khan, and acting on his advice succeeded in breaking up the confederacy by ceding the disputed Sholapur districts to Burhan Nizām Shah and making some concessions to the Rāja of Vijayanagar. Asad Khan then marched against the Shah of Golconda, and after punishing him severely returned in triumph to Bijāpūr.

The Ahmadnagar Shah, however, encouraged by his partial success, soon renewed hostilities and attempted to seize the former capital of the Bāhmani Sultans, Kulbarga, which was now a part of the Bijāpūr possessions; but Ibrāhīm with Asad Khan's assistance inflicted a severe defeat upon him, capturing 250 elephants and 170 cannon, besides Burhan Nizām Shah's camp equipage and royal insignia. Elated by this victory, Ibrāhīm began to create new enemies at home by his tyrannical conduct towards his own subjects, and so disgusted both his Musalman officers and the Brahman civilians that a conspiracy was formed to dethrone him in favour of his brother, Abdulla. The plot was discovered and Abdulla fled to Goa, where he was well received by the Portuguese. Ibrāhīm vented his rage upon the Brahman police officials, several of whom were put to death with excruciating tortures in the great square of Bijāpūr. His inveterate suspicions of Asad Khan revived, and again the old general retired in disgust to his Belgaum jāgir.

In the meantime Burhan Nizām Shah had been busy in aggravating his nephew's troubles by laying waste the Bijāpūr territories and inflicting several defeats upon Ibrāhīm's armies, while the Portuguese, whose trade with Southern India was menaced by the hostility of Bijāpūr, did their best to add fuel to the fire. Abdulla from his safe retreat at Goa entered into negotiations with Burhan Nizām Shah to obtain the latter's

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assistance in dethroning his brother. The Portuguese promised their help provided that Ibrāhīm's chief support, Asad Khan, could be won over. The Shah of Ahmadnagar accordingly sent one of his most trusted Brahman advisers to open negotiations with Asad Khan; but the steadfast loyalty of the old chieftain was not to be shaken. Indignant at the reflection upon his honour, he ordered the Brahman, if he valued his life, to get out of his sight and quit Belgaum with the least possible delay, lest his anger should get the better of his respect for the laws of civilised nations which safeguarded the persons of royal envoys. Burhan Nizām Shah, in spite of this rebuff, proceeded with his plans, and the Portuguese, finding that most of the nobles of Bijāpūr were in sympathy with Prince Abdulla, openly espoused his cause.

At this crisis Asad Khan became seriously ill, and Burhan Nizām Shah, in expectation of his death, instead of marching straight to Bijāpūr, where the discontented nobles were prepared to proclaim Prince Abdulla as Sultan, turned aside to take possession of Asad Khan's fortress and valuable estates. The delay was fatal to the success of the campaign. The Brahman envoy who was sent again with the object of seducing Asad Khan's retainers by bribes was seized and put to death. Ibrāhīm marched his army to the relief of Belgaum, and though Asad Khan died before the Sultan arrived, the Portuguese thought it prudent to return to Goa, and the other confederates retreated also. Burhan Nizām Shah now fell back upon the assistance of the Rāja of Vijayanagar, and a new plan of campaign was made by which Ahmadnagar was first to attack the son of the late Amīr Berīd of Bīdar, who had allied himself with Ibrāhīm. This plan was successful in drawing the Bijāpūr army into the field, and in a great battle near Kallian Ibrāhīm's forces were routed and the Sultan himself, surprised while taking his bath, narrowly escaped being taken prisoner. Rāmrāj then recaptured the fortress of Mūdkal and Raichor. His Muhammadan ally retook Sholapur.

The fate of the Bijāpūr dynasty was again hanging in the balance, when Burhan Nizām Shah died. Ibrāhīm succeeded

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in patching up a peace with his son and successor, Husain Nizām Shah, who was Burhan's son by his favourite wife, a dancing-girl called Amīna. At the same time Ibrāhīm made, as before, a temporary accommodation with the Rāja of Vijayanagar, who having no reason to love his Musalman allies was strictly opportunist in his policy. Ibrāhīm's next move was to attempt to recover the much-prized districts of Sholapur by playing with conspirators at the Ahmadnagar court who wished to supplant Husain by his half-brother, Ali, son of the late Shah of Ahmadnagar by the Princess Miriam of Bijāpūr. He succeeded in bringing over to his camp a powerful ally in the person of Burhan Nizām Shah's late commander-in-chief, Āīn-ul-Mulk, but Ibrāhīm's suspicions and violent character soon made an enemy of him, and after being defeated both by Husain Nizām Shah and by the rebel general, the Sultan of Bijāpūr was again besieged in his capital and compelled to appeal to his Hindu neighbours for help. Rāmrāj responded to the call and put the besieging army to flight. Ibrāhīm soon afterwards ended his days in a prolonged fit of rage, during which he caused several of the court physicians to be executed and others to be trodden under the feet of elephants. The rest of the medical profession of Bijāpūr fled precipitately from the city to escape similar treatment.

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CHAPTER X

FALL OF VIJAYANAGAR

ALI 'ADIL SHAH, Ibrāhīm's son, ascended the throne of Bijāpūr in 1557, an operation performed with less difficulty than was usual in Muhammadan courts of the period, as he had carefully prepared for the event of his father's death, and the partisans of the Shiah sect to which he belonged rallied round his standard immediately it was raised. The Khutba, or prayer for the Sultan, was read in the mosques according to the Shiah formula as in the days of his grandfather, Ismail 'Adil Shah, and forty persons followed in the new Sultan's train wherever he appeared abroad to utter curses against the Sahiba,[1] a custom calculated to arouse the fanatical spirit of the two chief Muhammadan sects.

Ali 'Adil Shah's next step was to strengthen his somewhat precarious position by sending ambassadors to negotiate both with his father's ally, the Rāja of Vijayanagar, and with the inveterate enemy of Bijāpūr, the Shah of Ahmadnagar. Rāmrāj responded in the most friendly spirit, while Husain Nizām Shah, viewing the overtures merely as an attempt to recover the territory which Ibrāhīm had lost, treated the envoys with marked coldness. Ali 'Adil Shah accordingly began to cultivate assiduously the friendship of his powerful Hindu neighbour. On the death of Rāmrāj's son and heir, he went with an escort of only one hundred horse to express his condolences in person. The Rāja received the Sultan with the greatest respect, and the Rānī, touched by Ali 'Adil Shah's professions of sympathy, adopted him as her son. After staying three days as an honoured guest the Sultan took his leave. Rāmrāj did not,

[1] The first three Khalifs, who were the means of excluding Ali from the succession.

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however, observe Musalman court etiquette by conducting his guest outside the city walls—a fact remembered by Ali 'Adil Shah when he afterwards wanted an excuse for attacking the infidel.

Having secured the support of the Vijayanagar armies, Ali 'Adil Shah now sent Husain Nizām Shah a peremptory demand for the restoration of the forts and districts which had been wrested from Bijāpūr in the late Sultan's reign. The ultimatum was rejected, and Rāmrāj joined Ali 'Adil Shah in overrunning the territories of Ahmadnagar right up to Daulatābād. Musalman historians, as an excuse for Ali 'Adil Shah's later treachery, declare that the Vijayanagar troops on this occasion perpetrated frightful excesses against the Muhammadan population. If the charge were true, the Hindus might with good reason have appealed to the established traditions of Musalman warfare as their justification; but modern history furnishes so many instances of unfounded charges of a like character being brought forward as the excuse for broken faith and reckless inhumanity that some degree of scepticism on this point would be judicious.

Husain Nizāmi Shah bought peace by the cession of the fort of Kallian, but immediately the enemy had retired he persuaded his neighbour, Ibrāhīm Qutb Shah of Golconda, to join with him in trying to recapture it. Ali 'Adil Shah again obtained assistance from Rāmrāj, and persuaded Ali Berīd Shah of Bīdar to join him also. The Golconda Shah thereupon changed sides, and Husain Nizām Shah was again besieged by the allied Hindu and Musalman armies. But when the monsoon rains began to hamper the besiegers the inevitable jealousies and intrigues engendered by such a combination of forces had their effect upon the policy of the allies. The Musalman chieftains were disgusted by the preponderating influence of Rāmrāj in the affairs of the Dekhan, and doubtless the caste prejudices of the Hindus caused dissensions in the camp, for complaints were made of their overweening arrogance. Rāmrāj, moreover, in return for his services, expected certain readjustments of frontiers at the expense of Bijāpūr and Golconda,

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which the Musalman monarchs pretended to regard as an insolent encroachment on the rights of Islam.

Rāmrāj withdrew his army to Vijayanagar, and Ali 'Adil Shah summoned a council to consider measures for the protection of the faithful against the oppression of the infidel. It was agreed that it was meritorious and highly politic to destroy the power of the comimon enemy of all the Musalman monarchs of the Dekhan; but the great economic resources of Southern India enabled Rāmrāj to maintain armies of such strength that none of the Musalman kingdoms could hope to contend against him singly. It was necessary to form a Pan-Islamic league, so that the strength of the united armies of the Dekhan could be brought into the field. Ali 'Adil Shah then sounded Ibrāhīm Qutb Shah as to the possibility of such a league, and the Golconda Shah, delighted with the proposal, sent an envoy to Ahmadnagar. Husain Nizām Shah was naturally pleased with the prospect of breaking up the powerful confederacy against himself and promptly agreed to a treaty of eternal friendship with Bijāpūr. The terms of the treaty were that his daughter, Chand Bībī, should be given in marriage to Ali 'Adil Shah, with the fortress of Sholapur as dowry—an arrangement which settled the chronic disputes between Ahmadnagar and Bijāpūr; secondly, that Ali 'Adil Shah's sister, Hadīa Sultāna, should marry Husain's eldest son, Prince Mūtarza; and, thirdly, that all the new allies should march against Rāmrāj at the earliest possible moment.

As soon as the diplomatists had brought the negotiations to this highly satisfactory conclusion, Ali 'Adil Shah immediately made his preparations for war and broke with his old ally by sending an envoy with a demand for the restoration of Mūdkal, Raichor, and other forts which had formerly belonged to Bijāpūr. Rāmrāj's indignant refusal was, of course, the *casus belli* which diplomatic etiquette required. The allies marshalled their armies on the plains outside Bijāpūr in December 1564, and shortly afterwards the great decisive battle was fought near Talikota, on the banks of the Krishna. Rāmrāj, then seventy years of age, showed conspicuous courage; at one

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time it seemed as if the Hindus had won the day, for Ali 'Adil Shah and his confederate of Golconda prepared to retreat. But at the crisis of the battle Rāmrāj was surrounded and taken prisoner. He was brought before Husain Nizām Shah, who immediately ordered his head to be cut off and exhibited on a long spear in front of the enemy. The Hindus were panic-stricken at the death of their Rāja and fled in disorder. The usual massacre of the infidel followed. One hundred thousand, says Ferishta, were slain during the battle and in the pursuit afterwards. The same authority explains that the disaster to the Vijayanagar army was due to an unruly elephant, but a European traveller, Caesar Frederick, who visited Vijayanagar two years after the battle, was told that it was caused by the treachery of the Rāja's Muhammadan officers, which under all the circumstances seems more probable, for it is unlikely that Ali 'Adil Shah and his confederates neglected obvious measures for tampering with the loyalty of Rāmrāj's Musalman body-guard.

The sack of Vijayanagar which followed the battle of Talikota revived the glorious memories of Mahmūd of Ghazni. It was one of the most populous and richest cities of Asia. Paez, the Portuguese traveller, who visited it early in the sixteenth century, describes it as being "as large as Rome and very beautiful to the sight." It was a garden city, laid out according to the old Indian traditions with spacious parks and orchards. There were, he said, "many groves of trees within it and many conduits of water which flow into the midst of it, and in places there are lakes; and the King has close to his palace a palm-grove and other rich-bearing fruit-trees." Below the quarter set apart for the Rāja's Muhammadan body-guard there was a little river, and on this side there were many orchards and gardens with many fruit-trees, for the most part mangoes and areca-palms and jack-trees, but also many lime- and orange-trees, growing so closely to one another that the quarter looked like a thick forest. He noticed also the cultivation of white grapes. Paez was greatly impressed by the density of the population—no troops, horse or foot, he said,

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could force their way through them, so great was the throng of people and elephants. "It was the best provided city in the world; stocked with provisions of every kind." There were broad and beautiful streets full of fine houses in which the wealthy merchants and principal craftsmen lived—for it was the chief trading and industrial centre of Southern India. The palace of the Rāja enclosed a space "greater than all the castle of Lisbon," and besides the bustling activity of the bazars Paez observed a vast crowd, which he estimated at fifteen to twenty thousand men, engaged in extending or repairing the great irrigation works which supplied the whole city with water. Paez was an observer, it should be noted, acquainted with the great cities of Italy in the palmy days of the Renaissance.

The victors, besides plundering the city, razing the chief buildings to the ground, and committing, as Ferishta states, "every species of excess," perpetuated the memory of their triumph in the grossest manner by preserving the head of their great antagonist as a trophy and exhibiting it publicly, covered with oil and red pigment, on the anniversary day of the battle—a barbarous custom piously observed by the Muhammadans of Ahmadnagar for over two and a half centuries after the famous battle. The empire of Vijayanagar never recovered the blow inflicted on it at Talikota. Neither did the Pan-Islamic league of the Dekhan long survive the death of the Ahmadnagar Sultan, Husain Nizām Shah, which followed soon afterwards. When Ali 'Adil Shah attempted to follow up his triumph by acquiring more of the Vijayanagar territories, Venkatādri, the late Rāja's brother, obtained the assistance of the Ahmadnagar army in defeating the Bijāpūr Sultan's ambitions—a fact which shows clearly that religious differences had very little to do either with the conflict between Vijayanagar and the Muhammadan rulers of the Dekhan, or with the disputes between the different Musalman dynasties,[1] though

[1] Talboys Wheeler summarises the whole history of the period under the title of "The Shiah Revolt in the Dekhan," making this 'revolt' the antithesis of the Sunni conquest of the Panjab and Hindustan, a sectarian view which totally misrepresents the dominant political factors in the struggle between Islam and Hinduism.

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religion was often used as the most convenient peg for hanging them on. It is most significant that in this 'holy war' of the Muhammadan rulers of the Dekhan the Hindu cavalry of Mahārāshtra continued to serve the Sultan of Bijāpūr.

The constant appeals of Muhammadan writers to the sanction of the Almighty for the acts of the political leaders of Islam tend to confuse the real differences of thought and of temperament which, after three centuries of close contact, continued to bring Hindus and Musalmans into deadly conflict with each other. In both communities there were men of the highest religious ideals, but the facts disclosed by Muhammadan historians show that the differences between them were sociological and political rather than religious. Islam was an individualistic cult, and especially a protest against the restraints which an older and more developed civilisation—in the interest of the whole community—placed upon individual liberty. In theory, at least, all men within the fold of Islam were equal. The reward of the faithful was an unbounded enjoyment of the present life and Paradise hereafter, and a part of this reward was the right to rule over all who were not of the fold, so that they too might increase the happiness and wealth of the elect. The rules of conduct which regulated Musalman society did not necessarily apply to the treatment of non-Musalmans. Such rights as the latter, individually or collectively, might possess were of the nature of benevolences contingent upon their good behaviour and the will of God, represented by the sword of Islam.

The Musalman political code was a sanctification of the doctrine that might is right. The Sultan's slave was a divinely appointed ruler, provided that he could wield the sword better than his master and produce a pedigree proving his descent from the Prophet. Pedigrees of this kind were as easily furnished as the family portraits of the modern *nouveaux riches*; and the divine authority which put no limit to the ambitions of a successful general made a virtue of conspiracy against the throne and multiplied petty autocracies indefinitely. The Hindu political system, built upon the bedrock of the free

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village community, was essentially an imperial democracy. Whether it was a great empire or a petty kingdom it never lost the democratic character which belonged to it. The Muhammadan system, based upon a fiction of social freedom, gave a slave leave to rule the world, but took away from the community its liberty and right of self-government. These were the vital points at issue between Hindu and Muhammadan states. On both sides religious principles were involved, but not those upon which Brahmans and mullās disputed. It needed a statesman of Akbar's genius to reconcile the differences.

The sovereign in both the Hindu and Muhammadan political systems was the representative of divine justice, but in the opinion of most Muhammadan writers of the period a liberal and fair distribution of the spoils of war among the elect covered a multitude of moral failings. The stain upon Mahmūd of Ghazni's character was not that he massacred tens of thousands of non-combatants, but that he kept too much of the spoil for himself. The grave offence of the Rāja of Vijayanagar was not that he was an infidel, but that being such he was more wealthy and powerful than any Muhammadan ruler in the Dekhan. He was also a high-caste Hindu whose social etiquette was a standing offence to the feelings of the Musalman freeman, however much he might try to avoid hurting them.

The quarrels between the different Musalman rulers had as little to do with sectarian differences of the mullās. The Turk hated the Mogul, the Afghan the Turk, the Abyssinian the Arab, and the native-born Musalman all the foreign mercenaries who had no root in the soil but boasted of their martial deeds and claimed the lion's share of the booty. The great problem of Musalman statecraft in the Dekhan was to reconcile the conflicting interests of the different military factions, rather than to steer straight between Sunni and Shiah sectarians.

The effect of the Musalman political creed upon Hindu social life was twofold: it increased the rigour of the caste system and aroused a revolt against it. The alluring prospect which it held out to the lower strata of Hindu society was as tempting as it was to the Bedouins of the desert and the nomads of

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Central Asia, who could enjoy to the full the pleasures of city life, but had not the industry and ability to build cities for themselves. Islam gave the nomad a divine command to force the infidels to build for them and fight for them, made the Sūdra a freeman and potentially a lord of Brahmans. Like the Renaissance of Europe it stirred up the intellectual waters, produced many strong men and some men of striking originality and genius. Like the Renaissance, also, it was essentially a city cult; it made the nomad leave his tents and the Sūdra abandon his village. It developed a type of humanity full of *joie de vivre*, eager to hunt and fight and keen for adventure of every kind, a man of epicurean tastes and many dilettante accomplishments. But it left the heart of India unchanged. Islam built its splendid mosques and tombs in the city, but the village temple remained.

Ali 'Adil Shah, with his treasury filled to overflowing with the immense wealth of Vijayanagar, set his captive Hindu craftsmen to work, according to the usual practice of Muhammadan conquerors, in building a great mosque to celebrate his triumph and in making his capital vie in splendour with the finest of Indian cities. A comparison of Ali 'Adil Shah's mosque with the mosque built by Rāmrāj for his Musalman mercenaries (now known as 'the Elephant Stables') shows clearly the origin of the great school of architecture subsequently developed at Bijāpūr. Its distinctively Indian character was due to the fact that Bijāpūr was further removed from Persian influences than the great Muhammadan centres of Northern India. After the fall of the Bijāpūr dynasty the royal craftsmen of Southern India assisted in the creation of the Tāj Mahāll at Agra.[1]

Before Ali 'Adil Shah died a shameful death in 1580 all the old quarrels of the Musalman states of the Dekhan were revived. But the Mogul dynasty of Hindustan had by that time become the dominant political power in India, and Akbar had already begun to rebuild a great empire upon the ancient Indo-Aryan foundation.

[1] A detailed analysis of Bijāpūr architecture is given in the author's *Indian Architecture* (Murray).

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29. The 'Elephant Stables,' Vijavanagar

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF INDIA

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CHAPTER XI

HINDU INDIA IN THE MUHAMMADAN PERIOD—CHAITĀNYA

IT would give a very imperfect impression of Indian life in early Muhammadan times if it were assumed that the somewhat sordid record of Muhammadan dynasties contained all that is most important to remember in the history of the period and absorbed the greater part of the intellectual activities of the people. In truth the real India, though deeply affected politically and economically by the impact of Islam, continued to live its own life in the villages, and outside the city walls the vast majority of the Indian population paid unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but were spiritually unaffected by the presence of the foreign conquerors. True, a devastating army might ravage whole districts, burn the villages, and bring death, or worse, in its train; but these were temporary visitations like plague, earthquake, or famine. The brutal soldiery were not quartered upon the villagers—they came and went like a cyclone. There was no costly furniture or elaborate upholstery to be replaced: the mud and thatch cottages were quickly rebuilt. The Mother's loving care would soon efface the marks of the Destroyer's wrath. The old religion of the Aryan village had a recuperative power stronger than all the armies of Islam. The Musalman zamindars or governors might squeeze the industrious peasantry, but they lived apart from them and rarely interfered with their daily life. There was always safety in numbers, and for his own peace and comfort even the most uncompromising Musalman put a limit to his exactions.

So when the storm blew over, the Hindu villagers who then, as now, formed the vast majority of the Indian population

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returned to their usual life. The victories of the Musalman warriors, which formed the theme of the court poet and historian, were unnoticed in the records of the village handed down in song and story from one generation to another. The village *kathaks* still sang the praises of Rāma and Krishna and of the heroes of the Mahābhārata, of Vikrāmāditya and Prithivī-rāja; and though the gossip of the Sultan's court might often circulate among the crowd of listeners gathered under the pipal-tree or in the temple mandapam, yet the devoted loves of Satyavāna and Sāvitrī, of Nala and Damayantī, the constancy of King Shivi and the trials of Prahlāda, told and retold to countless generations of villagers, never lost their interest. Foreign jargon, borrowed from the language of the court, crept into the vernaculars; but these importations were all related to camp and city life—the language of the countryside remained unaltered.[1]

It must not be supposed, however, that Islam in India appropriated all the civic culture which had been developed during the many previous centuries of Indo-Aryan rule. In the deeper sense India was never conquered. Islam seized her political capitals, controlled her military forces, and appropriated her revenues, but India retained what she cherished most, her intellectual empire, and her soul was never subdued. Her great university cities lost to a great extent their political influence; some changed their sites, as they had often done before; others, like Benares, Kānchi, and Nūdiah, were less populous and wealthy, but remained as the historic seats of Hindu learning. Mahāyāna Buddhism removed its intellectual centre to Southern China. Nālanda and Taksha-silā crumbled into dust; but Hindu pandits in the Sanskrit Tōls continued the pious work of the Buddhist monks, and throughout the Muhammadan period these centres of intellectual India produced a succession of great teachers to hand on the torch of Indo-Aryan wisdom to posterity.

[1] D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 382–383. The statement quoted relates only to village life in Bengal, but it is undoubtedly applicable to the greater part of India.

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And, excluding the small minority of the military classes attached to the soil who took service under the foreign conquerors and adopted their religion, the spiritual life of the village was totally unaffected by the change of rulers, except that the employment of Brahmans as the agents of Muhammadan revenue administration placed in their hands more power over the village communities and certainly tended to lower the high ideals of the Brahmanical order, even though the good sense of the people could easily discriminate between the excisemen and their spiritual teachers. In educational matters the Muhammadan rulers with few exceptions left the infidels to their own heretical devices—the schools they established were only for true believers. But the court language, Persian, was taught to Hindu children in some of their own village schools for the same reason as English is now taught, because it was the medium of communication between the people and the ruling powers, and because it opened the door to official employment.

Every Hindu village had its own schoolmaster, whose income was derived either from the lands assigned for the upkeep of the temple or from a fixed share in the village harvest. Generally the schoolmaster was also the village priest and Brahman; and as every Hindu teacher would regard all knowledge as religious, so the elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and perhaps Sanskrit grammar and poetry, given in the village schools was invariably of a religious character, though the higher spiritual truths were reserved for the Sanskrit Tōls, which took up the work of higher education when the Buddhist monasteries were broken up. The village schools were open to all Hindus within the Aryan pale, *i.e.* those of the four 'pure' castes. Every great wave of religious feeling which passed over India helped to break down the obstacles which Brahman prejudices placed in the way of the higher education of the masses; for it was not only the Buddha who taught higher Aryan truths to Sūdras: Sankarāchārya, Rāmanūja, and all the great Vaishnava teachers did the same, under conditions intended to provide against the

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prostitution of spiritual and intellectual power for immoral purposes.

It is in the history of one of these great movements, that of which Chaitānya was the leader, that we get a glimpse of the inner life of Hindu India during the Muhammadan period. Chaitānya, the great Vaishnava apostle of Bengal, was born at Navadwīpa, or Nūdīah, in 1486, about the time when Sikandar Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi, was bitterly persecuting his Hindu subjects, after his father, Behlōl Khan, had driven the wise and tolerant Sultan Husain Shah from the throne of Jaunpur. Nūdīah in the twelfth century had some political importance as the capital of the last Hindu rāja of the Sēna dynasty, Rāi Lakhsmaniya; in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was still famous as an educational centre, especially for its school of logic, known as the Navya Nyaya System. In spite of political changes Nūdīah remained a flourishing city, for its Sanskrit Tōls drew Hindu students from all parts of India, and to have been a scholar of Nūdīah was in itself a mark of distinction in the highest Hindu society.[1] It covered an area of sixteen square miles and was divided into sixteen wards. Here Hinduism continued to follow its own civic life and to pay its devotions to Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Learning, in its accustomed manner, regardless of the Musalman conqueror.

Chaitānya's father, Jagannāth Mishra, was a Brahman who had come to Nūdīah from Sylhet to complete his education, had married the daughter of a well-known pandit, and had settled down to the life of a Hindu householder in the shelter which a university city afforded even in those troublous times. He had ten children, eight daughters, who all died in infancy, and two sons, the elder named Vishvarupa, and the younger Vishvambara, afterwards known as Chaitānya. Vishvarupa was to have been married when he was sixteen years of age, but the religious atmosphere of Nūdīah had infected the lad's mind, and the night before the marriage was to have been celebrated he disappeared. Like the Buddha he had taken

[1] D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 410.

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the vow of asceticism, and with the pilgrim's staff and begging-bowl in hand had set out on the sannyāsin's spiritual quest. Unlike the Buddha he never returned to his grief-stricken home, and Vishvambara, affectionately called Nīmāi, because he was born in a shed under a nīmba tree,[1] remained the sole solace of his parents. Nīmāi was then five years old, the age when he should have gone to school, but owing to the objections of his mother, Shachī Devi, who was haunted by the fear that her darling child would follow his brother's example, he was kept at home.

Nīmāi soon became the terror of pious and learned Brahmans, and outraged all the sedate and orderly social traditions of the quarter by his boyish pranks. He joined with other boys in robbing orchards and in other petty pilfering; he teased little girls; and even dared to disturb elderly Brahmans at their devotions by running away with their ritualistic symbols, or by hiding their clothing when they were bathing. He grieved his Brahman parents by a total disregard of caste prejudices, never avoiding unclean refuse or other things which were pollution to the twice-born. When reproved he would say: "You do not send me to school, so how can I know what is clean or unclean? In my eyes nothing is pure or impure—all things are alike to me"—an answer which only added to his parents' sorrow, for it revealed the mind of the true sannyāsin, placed above the restrictions of caste rules. These and similar wise sayings, presaging his coming mission, were treasured up in his parents' hearts and remembered in after years.

At last Jagannāth's neighbours insisted that he should fulfil his duty as a Brahman by sending the boy to school, and Nīmāi at six years of age was placed in one of the Sanskrit Tōls under a pandit named Gangā Das and entered upon the first stage of a Brahman's life, that of a Brahmacharin.

It must be observed that throughout the whole story of

[1] See Mr D. C. Sen in his *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 415. According to Professor Jadunath Sarkar the signification of the name is 'short-lived,' and it was given to him to avert the evil eye.

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Chaitānya's life there is a vein of the miraculous, for no ordinary child would begin what is in reality college life at that age. But Nīmāi was of extraordinary precocity, and in a very short time was engaged in disputes with men of learning upon the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar and logic, though he still retained all the vivacity of boyhood and delighted in poking fun at the grave and reverend dons of Nūdīah. When he was twenty, or at an age when many Brahman youths would be seeking entrance into a Tōl for the completion of their education, Nīmāi had acquired so great a reputation that he established a Tōl of his own on the banks of the Bhāgirathī, the branch of the Ganges which flows by Nūdīah, and many pupils gathered round him, for he was famed for his wit and the brilliancy of his dialectics.

Up to this time Nīmāi's intellect had not developed the characteristic bent which distinguished his teaching as a Vaishnava reformer. The scholars of Nūdīah at that time were known for their highly intellectual accomplishments rather than for depth of religious fervour. An atmosphere of scepticism, created by the agnostic teaching of Buddhism, pervaded the Tōls of Nūdīah, and Nīmāi had imbibed all the intellectual pride of his Alma Mater. The chief interest of Nūdīah society was in passages of arms between famous philosophical experts armed with their favourite weapons of logic—an interest shared by all educated Hindus at that time. "No extraordinary marriage function could in those days be regarded as complete without its battle of the pundits. Invitations were sent out to members of rival schools to come and join their forces under the presidency and direction of such and such a Brahman. The contest would take place in the presence of the whole polite world, who, though they could not have waged it themselves, had quite sufficient knowledge of the language and matter under dispute to be keen and interested critics of skill. Put thus upon their mettle, the combatants would wrestle, and at the end of days or hours, as the case might be, the victor was declared. Sometimes the whole of the money grant about to be made by the father of the bride would be assigned by

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him to the chief of the pundits. This would be for a signal and crushing victory. More often it would be a proportion of three-quarters, five-eighths, or even fifteen-sixteenths. . . . As in the tournaments of European chivalry the appearance of the unknown knight might at any moment occur, so here also one never knew whether some stranger of genius might not upset the best-calculated chances. The *savant* must be prepared to defend his own pre-eminence against all comers, and against every conceivable method, new or old." [1]

In the greater contests, where the reputation of a famous university or of a well-known school of philosophy was at stake, the names of the victors and their literary works would be piously handed down to posterity, while no one except court poets and historians thought it worth while to perpetuate the memory of the contemporary war-lords and their tale of bloodshed and desolation. Thus it is that India has so little to tell of that side of her national history which forms the main theme of Western historians.

Several of the incidents recorded of Chaitānya's university life relate to intellectual bouts in which he defeated famous scholars of his day, representing Benares and other great seats of learning, who came to Nūdīah to win from her chosen champions the customary 'letters of victory,' by which the vanquished acknowledged the superior skill of their antagonists in logic, grammar, rhetoric, and similar subjects. Such proofs of intellectual ability and profound scholarship were regarded as indispensable qualifications for any teacher of Hindu religion.

Nīmāi, having established his fame as a pandit by overthrowing Keshava Kashmirī—an intellectual knight-errant who after winning many contests in other parts of India had come to Nūdīah as the champion of all India—married and settled down as a householder, the second stage of a Brahman's life. His father died about the same time, and on his return from a successful tour through Eastern Bengal, in which he added to his scholastic reputation, he found that his wife had died

[1] Sister Nivedita, *Footfalls of Indian History*, pp. 237–238.

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from snake-bite. To console his mother's grief he married again, but soon started off, with his mother's reluctant consent, on a pilgrimage to Gayā to make the customary Pīnda offerings so that his father's spirit might gain an easy passage to heaven.

This visit to Gayā was the turning-point of his life. Here he came under the influence of a venerable Vaishnava guru, Ishvara Purī, and adopted his teaching of the bhakti cult associated with the name of Krishna and the doctrine of the Bhagavad Gītā. Falling into a profound trance before the image of Krishna at the great temple which marked the site of the Buddha's enlightenment, he saw, like Arjūna, a vision of Krishna as Lord of the Universe. When he returned to consciousness on the banks of the Bhāgirathī—for his companions had meanwhile carried him back to his Tōl at Nūdīah—his whole spiritual outlook was changed. No longer the proud Brahman pandit conscious of his intellectual superiority whose chief delight was to confound an opponent by argument, he would spend hours only chanting the praises of Krishna and speaking of divine love. Love was the divine power which upheld the universe, caused the sun and moon to shine, kept the stars in their courses, and made the earth bring forth its fruits in due season. For man's happiness and spiritual wisdom love was all-sufficient. Even the outcaste was superior to the most learned Brahman if he were pious and had the love of God. But only when man and woman appear the same, and sex loses all its charm, could that love divine be realised. "Be like a tree," he said. "The tree gives shade even to him who cuts its boughs. It asks no water of anyone, though it be withering for want of it. Rain and storm and the burning rays of the sun it suffers, yet continues to give sweet-scented flowers and delicious fruits. Patiently serve others, even as a tree, and let this be your motto." [1]

To enforce the moral of his teaching by example he would go down to the river and help the old and infirm to carry their burdens or wash their clothes, regardless of the rules of his caste; and when anyone out of respect for his Brahmanhood

[1] D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 429.

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hesitated to accept his services he would say: "Do not, I pray you, prevent me. When I serve you I see God: these little deeds are holiness for me." [1]

The change which took place in Nīmāi's spiritual attitude is illustrated by an incident which occurred on one of his pilgrimages. He joined a crowd collected round a Brahman in a temple who with tears pouring down his face was reciting the Gītā with intense rapture, heedless of the ridicule and laughter which greeted the numerous mistakes of intonation and grammar which he was making. Nīmāi in his pandit days would likewise have scoffed at the Brahman's ignorance, but now he was deeply touched. "Tell me, sir," he said, "what deep meaning do you find in these words to inspire you to such rapture?" The Brahman replied: "Sir, I am very ignorant and do not know the meaning of the words. But my heart is full of joy when I see Krishna, dark [2] and beautiful, sitting in Arjūna's chariot teaching divine truth. I can never cease reading the Gītā, because I always behold Him when I am reading the book." Chaitānya, as he was then called, embraced the Brahman and said: "You only are truly worthy to read the Gītā, as you have understood the essence of its meaning." [3]

His pride in his dialectical powers completely disappeared, and his teaching now centred upon the concept of the barrenness of abstract philosophy. Often he would decline to enter into controversy on religious subjects and expressed his willingness to acknowledge his opponent's superiority in argument by the formal 'letter of victory,' taking his stand upon the issue that "the love of God passeth all understanding." Instead of the ritual of orthodox Brahmanism with all its complicated symbolism he organised *Sān-kirtana* [4] parties of singers and

[1] D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 429.

[2] The idea of Krishna's dark complexion had nothing to do with the racial question. As the Universal Lord, Krishna was connected with the Vedic concept of Eternity or the Cosmic Slumber—Nārāyana—and with Vishnu-Sūrya, the midday sun. His colour symbol was therefore either black, like the moonless night, or azure blue, like the sky at noon. See diagram, p. 30.

[3] Jadunath Sarkar, *Chaitānya's Pilgrimages and Teachings*, p. 88.

[4] Chanting God's name.

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dancers which, headed by himself and his chief disciple, Nityānanda, assembled in the mandapams of temples or courtyards of houses and went in procession through the streets chanting the praise of God and His love for mankind.

The Brahman aristocracy of Nūdīah were unmoved by the emotional fervour of the young reformer's religious teaching, but were greatly perturbed by the excitement it caused and by the crowds of all classes, especially of the lower castes, which followed Nīmāi in the processions. Nīmāi's open defiance of caste rules disgusted them, and the excited crowds of singers and dancers outraged their sense of academic propriety. Finding that Nīmāi remained indifferent to their protests and threats of spiritual pains and penalties, they appealed at last to the civil power, the Muhammadan Qāzī, to enforce respect for the ancient traditions of Nūdīah by prohibiting Nīmāi's noisy demonstrations. The Qāzī complied with their request and issued an order forbidding any more Sān-kirtana processions. On the evening of the same day Nīmāi went to the court-house with a great crowd of followers and started the Sān-kirtana service at the Qāzī's own door. The worthy magistrate came out in a rage to demand an explanation of this defiance of his orders, but, seeing the young Brahman standing in the midst of the crowd with his face lit up with divine ecstasy, he was so moved that he cancelled the prohibition and sent the people away with his blessing.

Chaitānya's relations with the Muhammadan officials in Bengal seem to have been on the whole friendly, and not a few Musalmans were among his followers. The *Chaitānya-charit-amrita*, a work written half a century after his death, tells the story of the conversion of a Muhammadan governor in Bengal who having heard of the extraordinary power of the Brahman monk came privately to see him, gave him an escort of soldiers to protect him from river pirates, and accompanied him through the province he administered with as much devotion as any of Chaitānya's Hindu followers.[1] At another time

[1] *Chaitānya-charit-amrita*, translated by Professor Jadunath Sarkar, pp. 193–195.

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Chaitānya enrolled ten Pathān troopers among his disciples after convincing one of them by arguments based upon the Muslim scripture.[1] He seems to have had more difficulty in overcoming the scepticism and intellectual pride of his fellow-Brahmans. It was their opposition which finally induced him to give up his Tōl at Nūdīah and to start on a pilgrimage to Brindāban, the scene of Krishna's early life, after having taken the sannyāsin's vow of asceticism and adopted the name of Krishna-Chaitānya, by which he was thereafter known.

So at the age of twenty-four years—a few years before Martin Luther began his attack upon the abuses of the Church of Rome—he set out on his great pilgrimage chanting the verse, "I too shall cross the terrible and dark ocean of life by devotion to the Supreme Being, as the sages did of yore, by service at the Lotus-feet of Mukunda," and accompanied by a devoted band of disciples. His mother hearing of his departure went after him, and seeing him with the shaven head of a sannyāsin was distracted with grief, for she feared that Nīmāi, like her other son, would be lost to her for ever. But Chaitānya, with the utmost tenderness, clasped his mother's feet and consoled her by promising to live wherever she might bid him and obey her wishes always, as he had done before. It was afterwards agreed between them that Chaitānya should make Purī his headquarters, so that his mother could easily get news of him and sometimes see him at Nūdīah.

The rest of his life Chaitānya spent in preaching the cult of bhakti according to the Vaishnava school of thought, and in devotion at the Jagannāth temple at Purī. Everywhere he went his passionate outpouring of spirit kindled a great flame of religious fervour among the common folk, to whom the doctrine of Eternal Love always makes a stronger appeal than any other intellectual argument. During his lifetime his success as a religious teacher was probably as great as that of the Blessed One of Bodh-Gayā at whose temple he won enlightenment. He travelled throughout the greater part of India, and was everywhere regarded by his followers as an

[1] *Chaitānya-charit-amrita*, Sarkar's translation, p. 226.

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incarnation of Vishnu and worshipped as the Deity, as probably had been the case with Sākya Muni, in spite of the agnostic tone of his teaching. Numerous miracles are attributed to him. He often fell into a state of hypnotic trance, as in the yogin's *samādhi*. Like Muhammad he was subject to fits of epilepsy, which were regarded as special manifestations of divine inspiration.

Chaitānya took special delight in the beauties of nature, and was intensely moved by the sight of a glorious sunset, of a noble river, or of a grove of asoka trees in full flush of flower. His power over wild beasts and all the denizens of the forest is said to have been marvellous. Elephants and tigers would join with the wild deer, who were drawn to his side by the sound of his sweet voice singing songs of divine love, and at the Master's command would trumpet or roar forth the name of Krishna, roll on the ground, and dance together with joy; while the peacocks strutted proudly and joined their shrill notes to the songs of the other forest birds. Even the trees and creepers bowed themselves down to listen to his voice, and all things animate and inanimate united in the universal paean of love and praise. Chaitānya's mission called forth from the suffering masses a new outburst of that *joie de vivre*, so clearly manifested in the art of Sānchī and Ajantā, which the Buddha's mission had evoked; only Chaitānya found no Asoka to establish his teaching upon an imperial footing by accepting it as the mainspring of State policy. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that his influence was felt by Akbar and his Muhammadan spiritual advisers when, fifty years after Chaitānya's death, they endeavoured to unite Islam and Hinduism in the cult of the Dīn-Ilāhī, which made devotion to the State a bond of spiritual fellowship.

Though this note of gladness rang through all Chaitānya's teaching and was its especial characteristic, he himself, like all great Indian teachers, lived an ascetic life and sternly reproved any form of self-indulgence on the part of those who wished to become partners in his lifework. Like the Saiva bhaktas of Southern India his whole missionary life was con-

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secrated to works of charity and self-denial. The lowest menial work, if performed in the service of God, was to him as joyful as any other. Nor did he in the intensity of his emotional temperament ignore the hygienic principles which were the bedrock of ancient Aryan religious teaching in India. As if to enforce the lesson that cleanliness is next to godliness, he himself with the most scrupulous care swept the roads and cleansed the temple at Purī, so that it was made " clean, cool, and pure, like his own mind." [1] But his bodily strength was worn out prematurely by the ardour of his religious zeal. He passed away in 1533, at the age of forty-seven, leaving his work to be carried on by the order of Vaishnava monks, or Goswāmis, which he founded.

[1] *Chaitānya-charit-amrita*, Sarkar's translation, p. 139.

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CHAPTER XII

BĀBUR

IT was about seven years before Chaitānya's death that Bābur won the great battle of Pānipat which made him practically master of Hindustan. His engaging personality, artistic temperament, and romantic career make him one of the most attractive figures in the history of Islam. He had all the energy and determination of his savage ancestor, Timūr, and at the same time was a much more chivalrous fighter. A vein of sincere religious feeling runs through his delightful autobiography, in marked contrast to the canting hypocrisy of Timūr's memoirs. It would be an interesting biological and psychological study, if sufficient data could be obtained to trace the whole sequence of racial intermarriages in distinguished Turki and Mongol families, to show the effect of the Mendelian law in producing exceptionally fine types of humanity through the crossing of a wild and highly cultivated stock. Such an investigation might throw much light upon the laws of eugenics in their international relationship. The great spiritual and intellectual development which took place in comparatively few generations in men of Turki and Mongol race after their conversion to Islam was more due to the eugenic instinct which prompted them to prefer Iranian and Indo-Aryan wives to their own women-folk, and to the influence of the highly cultured peoples they conquered, than to the civilising effect of the religion they professed to follow. Neither Turks nor Mongols of pure blood contributed much to the spiritual growth of Islam.

Bābur's mother was a Mongol, a descendant of Chīnghiz Khan, and he inherited many of the savage instincts of the untamed Tartar, as his name, 'The Tiger,' would seem to

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suggest. His character was very typical of the individualistic tendencies of Islamic culture. Towards his friends and in all his personal relationships with his subjects he was generous, chivalrous, and open-hearted. He could enjoy to the full all the delights which good company and beautiful surroundings could offer. But his sympathy with friends and acquaintances and his communings with nature never went from the little circle of his objective perceptions into the great world beyond. He had no sympathy for humanity at large. He did not exult in bloodshed as his savage ancestors did, yet he felt no compunction in continuing the barbarous traditions of Tartar warfare as part of the business of the war-lord; he notes down the wholesale butchery of prisoners in front of his royal pavilion and the building up of pyramids of human heads with the same faithfulness as he describes his joyful wine-parties, the delights of his pleasure-gardens, and his minute observations of topography and natural history.

There is not the slightest sense of personal responsibility towards the millions of human beings committed to his charge in his graphic and careful descriptions of the climate, boundaries, population, and natural resources of Hindustan. He goes round his newly won empire like a landlord taking stock of the latest addition to his estate. At the same time he is perfectly frank and makes no pretensions. "The chief excellency of Hindustan," he says, "is that it is a large country and has abundance of gold and silver." He does not disguise his feelings of disappointment both with the land and its people. The country and towns were ugly; its gardens had no walls. The people were not good fellows for a wine-party, they were unsociable and stupid; they had no genius for mechanical invention; knew nothing about architecture and pleasure-gardens; they had "no good horses, no good flesh, no grapes or musk-melons, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or bread in their bazars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick." "In the rainy season you cannot shoot, even with the bow of our country, and it becomes quite useless." Bābur grumbles wholeheartedly at the cursed

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country in which he was forced to live, like the British subaltern fresh from Europe.

The special circumstances of his early life no doubt helped to develop the finer side of Bābur's character. He escaped the usual atmosphere of sycophancy, adulation, and self-indulgence which surrounded the court of a Turkish or Mogul autocrat by being left fatherless at the age of twelve, and compelled to hold his birthright only with the help of his own native wit and with the advice of a remarkably clever and courageous grandmother. For many years he was, in the words of Ferishta, "like a king on a chess-board, moved from place to place, and buffeted about like pebbles on the sea-shore." The thrilling adventures of his boyhood, described so vividly in his memoirs, gave him a taste for an active, open-air life. The resourcefulness, courage, and cheerfulness he showed in the desperate situations in which he was often placed won for him many devoted adherents, whose steadfast loyalty was of invaluable service in his dealings with his shifty "Mogul rascals" and difficult Afghan subjects. By education Bābur was more Persian than Tartar, though he professed the Sunni instead of the Shiah doctrine to which the great majority of Persian Musalmans adhered. Like most Persians he was a great lover of flowers and of the grape-vine; but his drinking bouts under the spreading plane-trees or in his garden pavilions, where he watched with delight the red and yellow arghwān bursting into flower, or the pomegranates hanging red upon the trees, were never vulgar debauches, but rather an irrepressible overflow of his bright, sunny nature. In the face of difficulty or danger he always kept his lower self under strict control.

We left Bābur in a previous chapter at Agra, after the battle of Pānipat. But for his resolute character he would hardly have been permitted to enjoy the fruits of that great victory. His Afghan foes, though beaten, were by no means reconciled to the idea of Mogul rule. Many of their chieftains still held out in different provincial strongholds and refused to recognise Bābur's authority. One of those who had joined Bābur

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deserted with all his followers and raided the country round Agra, so that it was difficult for the Moguls to obtain forage and provisions. The Mogul troops and their horses were also suffering from the unaccustomed heat, and several of Bābur's chief officers urged him to return to Kabul. Bābur himself was by no means pleased with the first sight of his new kingdom. He had already been prospecting to find a site for " an elegant and regularly planned pleasure-ground," like those he had laid out at Kabul, with their water-courses, cypresses and flowering trees, beds of roses and narcissus, and the platform—' the Mount of Felicity '—in the centre. But the ravages of continual invasions had made the country round Agra a desert, and he found it " so ugly and detestable " that he was " quite repulsed and disgusted."

Nothing, however, would persuade him to listen to the proposal of leaving India as Timūr had done, and giving up his hardly won kingdom. He told his officers that " a kingdom which had cost him so much pains in taking should not be wrested from him except by death," and issued a proclamation to his troops stating his determination to remain in India, and at the same time giving leave to those of his followers who preferred safety to glory to return to Kabul. He would only keep in his service soldiers whose valour would reflect honour upon themselves, their Pādshah, and their country. " This order," says Ferishta, " had the desired effect: all murmurs ceased, and the officers, one and all, swore never to forsake him." Only one, Khwāja Kullan, whose reputation was already well established, accepted the permission to retire from the army on grounds of ill-health, and was appointed Governor of Kabul and Ghazni as a reward for his services.

The proclamation also had the effect of bringing over to Bābur's side several of Ibrāhīm Lodi's high officers, who being assured of Bābur's intention to remain and rule as the Sultan of Delhi, hastened to place themselves on the winning side. Having thus secured his position for the time being, Bābur decided to make Agra his capital instead of Delhi, which he found unsuitable for his water-gardens, baths, and airy pavilions,

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by which he sought to overcome what he called the "three inconveniences of Hindustan"—the heat, the strong winds, and the dust. There was, however, another adversary, more formidable than the Afghan, to dispose of. Bābur had not been long settled at Agra before he received intelligence that the Rāna Sanga of Chitor, at the head of a confederation of Rajput chieftains—including Mēdni Rāi, the Rāja of Chanderī, who had played so conspicuous a part in the history of Mālwā—was preparing to resist the Mogul invader, and, in order to secure the help of the Afghans, had put forward Mahmūd, son of Sikandar Lodi, as the rightful heir to the throne of Delhi. Placing little confidence in the loyalty of the Indian chieftains who had joined him, Bābur despatched them to maintain order in different parts of the provinces, and marched with his small but well-tried army, mostly of Mogul horse and artillery, to meet the enemy. Unfortunately his advance guard fell in with an Afghan force near Biana and was repulsed with considerable loss. This defeat caused consternation in the Mogul ranks, and was followed by the desertion of some of his men. To add to the trouble an astrologer in Bābur's retinue had observed that the planet Mars was to be seen every evening in the west, and predicted that to march in that direction would mean certain defeat.

Bābur began to be troubled in his mind, and recalled an oft-expressed resolve to make peace with the Almighty by giving up his intemperate habits. "Having sent for the gold and silver goblets and cups with all the other utensils used for drinking parties, I directed them to be broken, and renounced the use of wine, purifying my mind. The fragments of the goblets and other utensils of gold and silver I directed to be divided among *darweshes* and the poor." He also gave orders that no more wine should be sold in the camp. Then he called a council of war. Most of his officers advised that the army should retreat to the Panjab, after leaving a strong garrison at Agra. He listened attentively to their proposals and then put the question: "What will all the Muhammadan kings of the world say of a monarch whom the fear of death obliged to

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abandon such a kingdom?" It would be far better, he said, to face the prospect of martyrdom and fight to the last man. "For as it is certain that the soul must quit the body, it is fitting that it should do so with honour; for the whole aim of a man's life should be that when he dies he should leave his name untarnished." Bābur's appeal to the military conscience of his officers was again successful. With one voice they shouted approval of the Pādshah's words, and each took an oath on the Qurān that he would die in battle rather than turn his face from the enemy.

In the great battle which ensued, near Fatehpur-Sikri, Bābur adopted similar tactics to those he had used so successfully at Pānipat. His well-organised artillery played havoc in the Rajput ranks, and at the critical moment he led his body-guard in a desperate charge which broke their centre and won a decisive victory. Many of the Rajput chieftains, including several of their Musalman allies, fell on the field of battle, and the Rāna, severely wounded, only escaped with great difficulty to one of his hill-fortresses in Mālwā, where he died the same year. Bābur proceeded to invest Chanderī, Mēdni Rāi's ancestral stronghold. After a brave defence the garrison was reduced to the traditional forlorn hope, accompanied by its terrible sacrifice of women and children, in which the gallant Rāja and several thousands of his retainers perished. These events took place in 1527. Two years afterwards Bābur defeated the Afghans in Bengal near Buxar.

He lived only a year after this final victory, his vigorous constitution having been undermined by repeated attacks of malarial fever. From the time when, as a boy of twelve, he came into his little kingdom of Ferghāna he had reigned in all thirty-seven years, but as the Pādshah or sovereign ruler of Hindustan he reigned less than five. His administration during this short period was characterised by the same energy, decision, and promptitude as he always displayed on the field of battle. He laid out his capital at Agra as a splendid garden-city, with palaces, baths, tanks, wells, and water-courses, planting the orchards and flower-gardens which he

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made " in every corner of Agra " with fruit-trees and rare plants collected from all parts of his empire, planting roses and narcissus regularly and " in beds corresponding to each other," and making the water in the irrigation channels gurgle over carved stone water-shoots, as if to remind him of his dearly loved mountain-streams in Ferghāna. He restored the great trunk road which from the days of Chandragupta Maurya had connected the imperial capitals of Hindustan with the north-west frontier, building guard-houses and post-stations at regular intervals, and establishing an express letter mail between Agra and Kabul. He made a tour throughout his Indian dominions, taking stock of the inhabitants, the beasts, birds, fruit, and flowering trees; sending at one time an oleander of rare colour, at another a fruit-tree which was new to him, to his gardens at Agra, ordering the reparation of mosques and other buildings, having the distances from his capital measured, and everywhere following the Indo-Aryan tradition of a personal as distinguished from a bureaucratic administration which eventually reconciled India to Mogul rule—for it appealed to that deep religious feeling of the Indian masses which makes a just and wise ruler God's vice-gerent on earth, a feeling which no bureaucratic machine, however perfect it may be, can ever evoke.

The chronicles of the Mogul dynasty from the time of Bābur down to Aurangzīb's accession are entirely free from the narrow sectarian rancour which characterised so many of the previous Muhammadan rulers of India. There is no mention in Bābur's memoirs of the destruction of Hindu temples or of the wholesale massacre of the 'infidels' on account of their religion—though he often put prisoners to death in accordance with Mogul methods of 'frightfulness' in war. Bābur, though no bigot, showed his sincere piety both in his life and in the manner of his death, which took place in the last days of 1530, at the age of forty-nine. His eldest son, Humāyūn, to whom he was deeply attached, was seized with malarial fever while staying at his country estate at Sambhal. Bābur had him brought to Agra by boat so that the court physicians might attend him,

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but the latter pronounced the case hopeless. Bābur himself was in ill-health at the time, and he was greatly agitated at the prospect of losing his dearly beloved son and heir. In his grief he turned to his courtiers for advice. One of them observed that in such circumstances the Almighty sometimes deigned to accept the thing most valued by one friend in exchange for the life of another. Bābur at once clung to the idea, and declared that as of all things his own life was dearest to Humāyūn, so Humāyūn's life was dearest to him. He would offer his own life as a sacrifice to save his son.

The courtiers urged that so great a sacrifice was uncalled for—the Pādshah should give up instead the great Gwalior diamond taken at Agra, said to be the most valuable on earth. But Bābur was too sincere to put faith in courtly compromises in his dealings with God. Just because his life was more precious than any diamond the sacrifice must be made. He began solemnly to walk round Humāyūn's couch, as if it were an altar, and then retired to his apartment to finish his devotions alone. Soon afterwards he was heard to exclaim: "I have borne it away; I have borne it away!" He was seized with an acute attack of the malaria to which he had been subject since he had lived in India, and as he grew worse Humāyūn revived. So the first of the Great Moguls gradually sank and passed away, commending his son to the protection of the comrades who had shared his struggles and his victories, and imploring Humāyūn with his dying breath to be as kind to his own brothers as his father had been to him, and avoid the fratricidal strife which had brought so many former dynasties to ruin. He was buried at Kabul, his former capital, in the pleasure-garden which, in accordance with Mongol custom, he had chosen for his own tomb—"the sweetest spot in the neighbourhood."

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CHAPTER XIII

HUMĀYŪN

HUMĀYŪN was only twenty-two years of age when he began to reign, but he had had considerable experience both in war as one of Bābur's principal lieutenants, and in civil administration under his father's guidance. He was, says Ferishta, " a prince as remarkable for his wit as for the urbanity of his manners ; and for the most part disposed to spend his time in social intercourse and pleasure. He devoted himself, however, to the sciences of astronomy and geography, and not only wrote dissertations on the nature of the elements, but had terrestrial and celestial globes constructed for his use." Like Bābur his education and tastes were entirely Persian, though he was far from being an orthodox Musalman—the creed of Islam was held lightly by most of Timūr's descendants.

But while Timūr and Bābur were strong individualists and men of action, never allowing themselves to be turned from any set purpose, either by the preaching of a mullā or the prognostications of a soothsayer, Humāyūn was an amiable but weak dilettante who sought the advice of the court astrologers in all affairs of State. His palace was designed according to astrological rules, with seven halls of audience dedicated to the sun, moon, and five planets, each hall being decorated with appropriate symbolic paintings. He gave audience and transacted business in one of these halls alternately throughout the week, according to the planet of the day. Even the court attendants wore on their uniforms an emblem corresponding to the dominant planetary influence, so that the Pādshah might always be reminded of the occult power behind his own.

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In spite of these precautions the stars in their courses fought against Humāyūn. He fulfilled his father's dying injunctions to treat his brothers well by bestowing on them the governorship of different provinces; but this did not prevent them from seizing the first opportunity for trying to push him off the throne. The individualistic principles of Islam, while they gave a stimulus to new creative effort by breaking up ancient civilisations, did not promote political stability, within or without the Muhammadan pale; for every man who wielded the sword of Islam was tempted to test its strength and to use it for his own ends, regardless of family ties or social obligations. And for those who stood nearest to the throne the temptation was always strongest. Humāyūn had therefore to maintain his right of succession not only against his intriguing brothers, but against a distant relative, Muhammad Zamān Mirza, who first tried to get rid of him by assassination, and, having failed, fled to Gujerat, where he was aided by Bahādur Shah in raising a mixed army of Mogul, Afghan, and Rajput mercenaries.

Another claimant to the throne of Delhi shortly afterwards appeared in the person of 'Alā-ud-dīn, the brother of the late Sultan Ibrāhīm Lodi, who also found Gujerat a convenient recruiting ground, and Bahādur Shah's treasury useful for supplying the sinews of war. 'Alā-ud-dīn was first in the field with an army of 40,000 men, which he sent under the command of his son, Tātār Khan, to attack Humāyūn at Agra; but before it reached the neighbourhood of the city the greater part of it had deserted, and the imperial army, led by one of Bābur's time-serving brothers, fell upon the remainder and nearly annihilated it—Tātār Khan and three hundred of his officers being amongst the slain.

Humāyūn had now to deal with Bahādur Shah himself, a more formidable adversary, for Gujerat was then one of the most powerful states of Northern India, its army being particularly strong in artillery. Apparently from a chivalrous feeling towards a fellow-Musalman, Humāyūn looked on while Bahādur Shah was engaged in battering down the defences of Chitor,

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but then marched against him. Bahādur Shah, imitating Bābur's tactics at Pānipat, entrenched himself strongly, expecting that Humāyūn would repeat Ibrāhīm Lodi's blunder by hurling his army against his batteries. In this he underestimated Humāyūn's military capacity, for instead of falling into the trap prepared for him the latter sent strong bodies of cavalry to scour the country in the rear of Bahādur's camp and cut off his supplies. In the course of two months the Gujerat army was reduced to a state of famine, and the Sultan after blowing up his guns left it to its fate and escaped by night with a few followers to the fortress of Mandu. Humāyūn after dispersing the remnants of the Gujerat forces proceeded to attack Mandu, and Bahādur Shah was eventually compelled to hide himself in the island of Dīu, one of the remotest corners of his dominions, while the Mogul army overran the greater part of Gujerat and Mālwā, which Bahādur Shah had conquered and annexed some years before. Humāyūn, who was not lacking in personal courage, distinguished himself at the siege of Champanīr by leading a party of three hundred men in scaling the walls of the fortress by night, with the help of steel spikes fixed in the scarp of the rock. He then forced his way sword in hand through the defenders' ranks and opened one of the gates for the entrance of his troops.

So far all seemed to go well with the Mogul dynasty. But while he was prosecuting this successful campaign Humāyūn received news of a still more formidable rival threatening the security of his throne. This was Shēr Khan Sūr, an Afghan chieftain of great ability and strength of character, who had taken service under Bābur, but only with a view to finding the auspicious moment for driving the detested Moguls out of India. Previous to entering the Mogul service he had taken a prominent part in the politics of Bihār, where the Afghans had established themselves for many generations, and where his family estate, or jāgir, was situated. Family quarrels over the possession of the estate had thrown him alternately from the Afghan to the Mogul side. Bābur had restored to him his jāgir, of which he had been deprived by

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one of the Afghan rulers of Jaunpur; but as soon as Mahmūd, one of Sikandar Lodi's sons who fought with the Rāna Sanga against Bābur, had obtained possession of Bihār after the disastrous battle near Agra, Shēr Khan joined him. His great ambition would not permit Shēr Khan to remain loyal to any master, Afghan or Mogul. He quarrelled with Mahmūd, and, it is said, brought about his defeat by withdrawing his men in the battle which restored Bābur's supremacy in Bihār.

Early in the reign of Humāyūn, Shēr Khan had played his game so well that though nominally owing allegiance to the Mogul Emperor he had obtained possession of the strong fortress of Chunar, near Benares, commanding the main entrance to the plains of Bengal through the Ganges valley, and was practically master of Bihār. Humāyūn made the mistake of allowing his scheming vassal to retain possession of this important stronghold, and Shēr Khan, as soon as the Emperor was fully occupied in Gujerat, threw off the mask and proceeded with consummate strategy to develop his plans for driving the Mogul interlopers from Hindustan. He had the advantage of being Indian by birth, and thus was regarded by many Hindus as well as by Indian Muhammadans as their natural leader. Humāyūn, as soon as he realised Shēr Khan's intentions, left Gujerat in charge of his brother Mirza Askarī, and marched with a large army to attack Chunar, which Shēr Khan left with a strong garrison while he himself was strengthening his position by the conquest of Bengal. The siege of Chunar, in which Humāyūn was assisted by a Turkish artillery officer, Rūmi Khan, formerly in the service of the Sultan of Gujerat, lasted several months, but at last the Afghan garrison surrendered. In the meantime Shēr Khan had sacked Gaur, and thus provided himself with means for the more arduous campaign against Humāyūn, but as he was not yet prepared to meet the imperial Mogul army he evacuated Gaur as soon as Chunar had fallen, and inveigled Humāyūn into a perilous advance into Bengal at the height of the monsoon floods by leaving the road open for him.

Humāyūn foolishly pushed on, but had no sooner taken

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possession of Gaur than he found his communications cut off by floods. He was thus compelled to remain at Gaur for several months, during which time he lost many of his men by sickness and desertion, and his brother Mirza Hindal, whom he had left with part of the imperial army in Bihār, went off to Agra to work up a rebellion, hoping first to secure the throne for himself and then to finish off the Afghan. Shēr Khan, while Humāyūn and his brother were thus occupied, had obtained possession of the fortress of Rohtas by a similar trick to that by which Nasīr Khan had taken the stronghold of Asa Ahīr several centuries before, and watching his opportunity placed his small but well-organised forces between Humāyūn and Agra. He then retook Chunar and Benares, and feeling sure that Humāyūn could not now escape him laid siege to Jaunpur. When the state of the roads permitted, the remnants of the imperial army set out on its return march and Shēr Khan commenced to stalk his quarry. Humāyūn was intercepted near Buxar, and both armies remained there watching each other for two months, the Moguls trying to bridge the Ganges, and the Afghans waiting for an opportunity to attack, while Shēr Khan tried to throw Humāyūn off his guard by making a pretence of negotiating.

At last Shēr Khan by a night march and skilful strategy seized all the river craft and surprised the Mogul camp, with the result that the greater part of the demoralised army was cut to pieces or drowned in the river. Humāyūn by the persuasion of some of his officers was induced to leave the field when all was lost, and tried to cross the Ganges on horseback; but the exhausted animal was drowned, and the Emperor would certainly have shared the same fate had not a water-carrier in mid-stream helped him over on his inflated goat's skin. Humāyūn's arrival at Agra after the disaster put an end for the time being to Mirza Hindal's schemes. His other brother, Mirza Kāmrān, came from Kabul with reinforcements, and in face of the danger which threatened the Mogul dynasty the three cried truce and agreed to put their rivalries aside for a more convenient season. In the meantime Shēr

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Khan was taking advantage of his victory by consolidating his position in Bengal and preparing for the decisive blow which would break completely the Mogul power in Hindustan, for as yet the imperial forces greatly outnumbered his own. He had everything to gain by suspending his stroke, for the Mogul court was a hot-bed of intrigues, and after a few months Mirza Kāmrān again quarrelled with his brother and went off to Lahore with most of his retainers. About nine months after his victory at Buxar, Shēr Khan, who had now adopted the title of Shah, with about 50,000 men advanced to Kanauj, while Humāyūn marched from Agra to meet him with an army of twice that number. Again the two armies faced each other for a considerable time, the Afghans having the advantage of position, and the Moguls losing heavily by desertions. Shēr Shah waited until Humāyūn was forced by the breaking of the monsoon to move his camp, and then attacked. The Mogul army was so completely routed that the road to Agra lay open, and the Afghans were soon again in possession of the capital of Hindustan.

The battle of Kanauj took place in 1540. Humāyūn fled from the field on an elephant and again narrowly escaped drowning while crossing the Ganges. His adventures for the next three years, until he found refuge at the court of the Shah of Persia, would form an excellent plot for an historical novel. After hurriedly collecting as much as possible of jewels and other valuables from the imperial treasury at Agra, he fled to Lahore, accompanied by his brothers, Hindal and Askarī, hoping to get assistance from Kāmrān. But the latter, as soon as he realised the situation, opened negotiations with Shēr Shah, who allowed him to remain unmolested at Kabul in return for the cession of the Panjab. Mirza Hindal retired to Kandahar, so Humāyūn, who had been joined by some of the Mogul officers who had escaped from Kanauj, was left to his own resources. The cheerful spirit which was his best characteristic did not, however, desert him. At a musical party given at Mirza Hindal's house he fell deeply in love with a beautiful young Persian girl, named Hamīda, and married

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her in spite of his brother's remonstrances. He also succeeded in collecting a small army, and accompanied by his bride, Banu Begam, as she was called, he marched southward into Sind, hoping to get assistance from the Muhammadan governor of that province in recovering possession of Gujerat. In this he was disappointed, for after a year and a half of unsuccessful campaigning and fruitless negotiations his Mogul troops had nearly all deserted and he was constrained to apply for protection to the most powerful Rajput ruler in that neighbourhood, the Maharāja Māldēo of Mārwār.

After terrible sufferings in the desert he succeeded in forcing his way to the vicinity of Jodhpur, only to find that there was nothing to be hoped for in that quarter, for Māldēo was preparing to seize him and hand him over to Shēr Shah. So with the few followers who still remained faithful to him Humāyūn turned to fly towards Amarkot, a fortress on the outskirts of the Sind desert, where he hoped for a better reception from another Rajput prince, the Rāna Prasād. Pressing on by night through the waterless desert with Māldēo's troopers in pursuit, Humāyūn and the young Begam, who had shared all his misfortunes, were in a pitiful plight. Many of his retinue died of thirst or went mad. After some days they were overtaken and surrounded by a body of Rajput horse under the command of the Crown Prince of Mārwār, who, however, contented himself with upbraiding Humāyūn for violating Hindu territory and Hindu laws, and then supplied him with water and allowed him to continue his march. In spite of this unexpected help from the enemy the Moguls suffered great privations before they reached Amarkot. For three days they were without water, and when at last they came to one of the deep wells of the desert country several of the party, maddened by thirst, threw themselves into it in their eagerness to reach the first skinful as it was drawn to the surface. The next day they reached a small stream which showed that they were approaching the edge of the desert. In spite of the loss of several camels, which died from overdrinking, Humāyūn and the Begam with the miserable rem-

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nant of their retinue at last straggled into Amarkot. Their hopes of assistance from the Rāna were not disappointed. He not only showed them the kindest hospitality, but offered Humāyūn the assistance of his armed forces in another attempt to obtain possession of Sind. It was in this haven of refuge, under the protection of a Hindu rāja, that Banu Begam gave birth to a son, Prince Akbar, known to posterity as the greatest of the Great Moguls. Humāyūn, accompanied by the Rāna and his army, had already started on his second expedition to Sind when he received the news. He indented on the saddle-bags of his retinue—which now did duty for the imperial Mogul treasury—for the customary presents to his friends, and found only a bag of musk. This was brought on a china plate and distributed among them with the pious wish that his son's fame might be spread abroad throughout the world like the fragrance of that perfume.

At the beginning all went well with the expedition. The Rāna was joined by several other Rajput chieftains, and a few Mogul troopers rallied to Humāyūn's standard, so that the whole force mustered 15,000 cavalry. But Humāyūn's tactless conduct and disregard of Hindu susceptibilities offended his Rajput friends, and before the army came into touch with the Muhammadan forces in Sind the Rāna had withdrawn his troops in disgust and returned to Amarkot. Humāyūn was now left to settle matters with Husain Arghūn, the ruler of Sind. After some fighting an arrangement was made by which Humāyūn was allowed to retire unmolested on condition that he went to Kandahar, where his brother Mirza Askarī was governor on behalf of Kāmrān. At this juncture he found an invaluable recruit in Bairām Khan, a Turkoman noble—one of Bābur's generals and a most capable officer—who after the disaster of Kanauj had escaped to Gujerat, and now succeeded in rejoining his sovereign. He remained by Humāyūn's side throughout all his subsequent difficulties and dangers, and did much to restore the fortunes of the Mogul dynasty.

Humāyūn's brothers, on the other hand, proved to be as treacherous as ever. Before he reached Kandahar he was

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warned by a friendly messenger from the city that the Mirza, at the instigation of Husain Arghūn, was on his way to seize him and hold him as a prisoner so that he and Kāmrān might be in a position to bargain with Shēr Shah. Humāyūn, accompanied by the Begam and Bairām Khan, had hardly time to mount and gallop away, leaving the infant prince to his uncle's compassion, before the Mirza and his troopers dashed into the camp. Askarī, failing in his main object, carried off his nephew to Kandahar, and Humāyūn, with only forty-two followers, succeeded in reaching the Persian province of Seistan, where he was received with all honour by the governor on behalf of the Shah Tahmāsp and supplied with every requisite for a dignified appearance at the Persian court. Humāyūn was not at the end of his troubles, but he was safe from his crafty enemy, Shēr Shah, and from the machinations of his nearest relatives.

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CHAPTER XIV

SHĒR SHAH'S REIGN AND THE RESTORATION OF THE MOGUL DYNASTY

DURING the three years which had elapsed since his great victory over the Moguls at Kanauj in 1540 Shēr Shah had been fully occupied in extending his conquests and in restoring order in his new dominions. In this task he proved his high qualities both as a military leader and as an administrator. The former Mogul provinces had relapsed into a state of complete anarchy. The roads were insecure for mercantile traffic, and the cultivators upon whose industry the revenues of the State depended were at the mercy of the disbanded Mogul soldiery and of other marauders. Shēr Shah was a rigid disciplinarian: he punished with equal severity his own Afghan soldiers and Mogul or other outlaws when caught plundering the villagers. He showed no mercy either to zamindars or ryots when they failed to pay the governmental dues.

Born in India, he had acquired an intimate knowledge of village life and a practical experience of administrative work while he was in charge of his father's estates at Sahserām, and as an astute estate manager had realised that the interests of the landlord were bound up with the well-being of his tenants. He was a well-read man, and following the traditions of previous Afghan rulers in Bengal had doubtless made himself acquainted with the principles of Hindu as well as Muhammadan polity. He was, however, far from being the vicegerent of Vishnu, the Preserver, after the Hindu ideal of government, though his Muhammadan biographer extols the justice of his dealings with the ryots and asserts that before his time the settlement of land revenue was left to the caprice

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of Government officials. Like many modern writers, Abbas Khan, the author of the *Tārīkh-i Sher Shāhī*,[1] assumes that Indian history began with the Muhammadan conquest. Shēr Shah was a strict Sunni who dealt with Hindu ryots in the same spirit as a prudent farmer treats his horses and cattle—they were to be protected from injury and maltreatment so that they might contribute the more to their owner's strength and wealth; for Shēr Shah acted entirely on the principle *L'État, c'est moi.*

His government was a military despotism and his administrative methods thorough in the modern Prussian sense. The whole country was effectively garrisoned so that no one dared to dispute his authority or disturb the regular collection of the imperial revenue. Of the people of Kanauj it is said by his biographer, "no man kept in his house a sword, an arrow, a bow, or a gun, nay, any iron article whatever except the implements of husbandry and cooking utensils; and if he [the Governor] ordered the headmen of any village to attend him, they obeyed his order, and dared not for one moment to absent themselves. The fear and dread of him was so thoroughly instilled into the turbulent people of those parts that according to the measurement they paid their revenue to the treasurers."[2] He was as severe with the zamindars, the fiscal agents of Muhammadan India, as he was with the ryots. When the headmen and cultivators of the province of Sambhal fled from the oppression of the Musalman officials he sent Masnad Ali Isā Khan, "a lion in valour and gallantry," with orders to enlist five thousand new cavalry for restoring order in the province. The new governor "so humbled and overcame by the sword the contumacious zamindars of those parts that they did not rebel even when he ordered them to cut down their jungles, which they had cherished like children, but cut them with their own hands, though drawing deep sighs of affliction; and they reformed and repented them of their thieving and highway robberies, and they paid

[1] Translated in vol. iv of Elliot's *History of India.*
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

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in at the city their revenue according to the measurements." [1] So Shēr Shah, it is said, had no more anxiety regarding the province of Sambhal.

Shēr Shah's system of revenue-collection is described by the same writer as follows: "There was appointed in every *pargana* one *amīr*, one God-fearing *shikkdār*, one treasurer, one *kārkun* to write Hindī and one to write Persian; and he ordered his governors to measure the land every harvest, to collect the revenue according to the measurement, and in proportion to the produce, giving one share to the cultivator, and half a share to the *mukaddam* [headman]; and fixing the assessment with regard to the kind of grain, in order that the *mukaddams* and *chaudharīs* and *'āmils* should not oppress the cultivators, who are the support of the prosperity of the kingdom. Before his time it was not the custom to measure the land, but there was a *kānūngo* in every *pargana*, from whom was ascertained the present, past, and probable future state of the *pargana*. In every *sarkār* he appointed a chief *shikkdār* and a chief *munsif*, that they might watch the conduct both of the *'āmils* and the people; that the *'āmils* should not oppress or injure the people, or embezzle the King's revenue; and if any quarrel arose among the King's *'āmils* regarding the boundaries of the *parganas*, they were to settle it, that no confusion might find its way amongst the King's affairs." How little the prosperity and happiness of his Hindu subjects counted in Shēr Shah's land policy may be judged from the next sentence. "If the people, from any lawlessness or rebellious spirit, created a disturbance regarding the collection of the revenue, they were so to eradicate and destroy them with punishment and chastisement that their wickedness and rebellion should not spread to others." [2]

Shēr Shah was, however, scrupulously careful to protect the crops of industrious ryots from unnecessary injury. When on the march he stationed guards to prevent any of his soldiery trespassing on cultivated ground, and if any man disobeyed

[1] *Tārīkh-i Sher Shāhī*, Elliot, vol. iv, pp. 415–416.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 413–414.

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orders by plucking the corn he would himself cut off the ears of the offender and have him paraded through the camp with the corn hung round his neck. Neither would he allow the ryots to be plundered or carried off as slaves when he entered an enemy's country, for, said he, " the cultivators are blameless, they submit to those in power; and if I oppress them they will abandon their villages, and the country will be ruined and deserted, and it will be a long time before it again becomes prosperous." [1] He was also generous in rewarding the faithful service of his officials, especially his own countrymen. His reflections on this subject are characteristic of his administrative principles. " I have examined," he said, " and accurately ascertained that there is no such income and advantage in other employments as in the government of a district. Therefore I send my good old loyal experienced servants to take charge of districts, that the salaries, profits, and advantages may accrue to them in preference to others; and after two years I change them, and send other servants like to them, that they also may prosper, and that under my rule all my old servants may enjoy these profits and advantages, and that the gate of comfort and ease may be opened to them." [2] And to every pious fellow-countryman who came to the imperial court Shēr Shah gave presents " exceeding his expectations," and he would say: " This is your share of the kingdom of Hind which has fallen into my hands; this is assigned to you, come every year to receive it." Nor did he forget the men of his own clan—the tribe and family of Sūr who dwelt in the land of Sūr. He sent them an annual stipend, and during his reign " no Afghan whether in Hind or in Roh was in want, but all became men of substance." No wonder his pious biographer invokes blessings on his head!

At the same time Shēr Shah was impartial in exacting from all his subjects implicit obedience to his orders. No one dared to dispute his authority, or act in opposition to his administra-

[1] *Tārīkh-i Sher Shāhī*, Elliot, vol. iv, p. 422.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 414.

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tive measures. "If a son of his own, or a brother, or any of his relatives or kin, or any chief or minister, did a thing displeasing to Shēr Shah, and it got to his knowledge, he would order him to be bound and put to death." [1] Shēr Shah was a good estate manager. Following the ancient Hindu traditions, he paid special attention to the upkeep of roads and to the security and comfort of passengers on the king's highway. He built many serāis, with fruit gardens and separate provision for Hindus and Musalmans. Many of the roads were planted with avenues of fruit and shade-giving trees. In every serāi two horses were kept to provide a regular postal service, so that every day news might be conveyed to the imperial court from the most distant parts of Hindustan. The headmen of villages were made personally responsible for the detection of cases of highway robbery. If they failed to point out the thieves they were compelled to make good the traveller's loss; "for," so the wise chronicler of the times reflects, "it has been generally ascertained that theft and highway robberies can only take place by the connivance of these headmen. . . . *Mukaddams* and cultivators are alike thieves, and they bear to each other the intimate relations of kinsmen; hence either the *mukaddams* are implicated in thefts and highway robberies, or can ascertain who perpetrated them." [2] In cases of murder, when the perpetrators were not discovered Shēr Shah's methods were equally thorough. The headman of the village within whose limits the murder had occurred was arrested and kept in prison until he disclosed the whereabouts of the criminals—in default he was to be put to death.

Shēr Shah showed brilliant capacity as an organiser, both in military and civil affairs. By dint of indefatigable industry and personal attention to the smallest details of administration he restored law and order throughout Hindustan in the short space of five years. And no doubt the long-suffering, law-abiding ryot was grateful to the iron-handed Afghan for an interval of comparative peace, and for protection against indiscriminate plunder, though he might sometimes sigh for

[1] *Tārīkh-i Sher Shāhī*, Elliot, vol. iv, p. 428. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

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the golden days when even Sūdras were Aryan freemen, and the laws of the village Assemblies were respected even by the King of Kings and Supreme Lord of the Five Indies.

While he was thus putting his house in order Shēr Shah was also energetically organising his military forces and conducting several campaigns. He established fortified posts in many parts of his dominions where danger threatened from invasion, or where he wished to overawe an unfriendly population. The principal of these was the great fortress of Rohtas, on the Jhīlam river, named after the stronghold in Bihār, and designed to strengthen his hold upon the Panjab. After frustrating the attempts of Humāyūn to retrieve the disaster of Kanauj, Shēr Shah was obliged to display his military strength in Bengal in order to suppress an ambitious viceroy who, following his own example, aspired to be an independent ruler. When his recalcitrant subject had been put in chains, he partitioned Bengal into a number of provinces and distributed the command of them among chieftains of different clans whose mutual jealousies were a guarantee against similar attempts.

Two years after his accession Shēr Shah added Mālwā to his dominions. In 1542 he laid siege to Raīsīn, a Rajput stronghold which surrendered after a siege of six months, when the walls had been battered and breached in many places by his artillery. The Rajputs, trusting to his solemn promise that their lives would be spared, came out of the fortress, but while they were encamped in the neighbourhood Shēr Shah repented of his promise and gave orders for a wholesale massacre. The Rāja Pūran Mall, when he was told that the Afghans had surrounded his camp, first killed his beloved wife, Ratnāvalī—" who sang Hindī melodies very sweetly "—and then called upon his retainers to sacrifice their own wives and families. " While the Hindus," says the Musalman historian, " were employed in putting their women and families to death, the Afghans on all sides commenced the slaughter of the Hindus. Pūran Mall and his companions, like hogs at bay, failed not to exhibit

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valour and gallantry, but in the twinkling of an eye all were slain." [1]

Such of their wives and families as were not slain were taken prisoners. One daughter of Pūran Mall and three sons of his elder brother were taken alive; the rest were all killed. Shēr Shah gave the daughter of the Rāja to some itinerant minstrels, "that they might make her dance in the bazars." The boys were castrated, "so that the race of the oppressor might not increase."

The excuse given for Shēr Shah's treachery and fiendish cruelty on this occasion was that some Muhammadan widows had complained of the Rāja's conduct, and that the 'Ulamās, when consulted in the matter, had decided that the sovereign's promises and oaths under these circumstances were not binding.

After this exploit Shēr Shah's mind was "quite at ease concerning the kingdom of Hind." But, persuaded by his Sunni nobles and chieftains, who urged that he should not sheathe the sword until Islam in India was purged of the Shiah heresy, he determined to strike at the root of the evil by breaking the power of the Hindu, then represented by the Maharāja of Mārwār, Māldēo. So in 1543 he collected all the forces of his empire, and invaded the latter's territory. Many of the Rajput chiefs rallied to the Maharāja's standard, and Shēr Shah made little progress until by means of forged letters dropped by his spies in the Rajput camp he managed to arouse the Maharāja's suspicions regarding the loyalty of some of his chieftains. Two of the latter, named Jaya Chandel and Gohā, in order to wipe off the imputation upon their honour withdrew their retainers, numbering about 12,000 men, and rashly attacked the whole imperial army, which outnumbered them by more than six to one. For once Shēr Shah's cunning calculations were entirely upset. The Afghan camp was quite unprepared for the sudden onslaught of the Rajput cavalry and was at first thrown into confusion. When at last the Afghans rallied and the Rajputs were forced to retire,

[1] *Tārīkh-i Sher Shāhī*, Elliot, vol. iv, p. 403.

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even Shēr Shah acknowledged the courage of the infidel, and, alluding to the barrenness of the soil of Mārwār, declared that he " had nearly given the kingdom of Delhi for a handful of millet."

Soon after this the Maharāja was compelled to retire to the fortress of Siwāna, on the borders of Gujerat, and Shēr Shah took possession of Chitor. In 1545 the imperial army laid siege to Kālanjar, which was stoutly defended by the Rāja Kīrat Singh. In consequence of Shēr Shah's treachery at Raīsīn, the Rajputs refused to come to terms. While Shēr Shah was directing his batteries, which had been placed upon high earthworks, so as to command the interior of the fortress, an enemy shell exploded a magazine close to where the Emperor was standing. Shēr Shah was carried to his tent mortally wounded, but continued to give orders to his officers for the final assault by which the fortress was won. The brave defenders were put to the sword, except the Rāja, who with a few of his retainers fought his way through, but was taken prisoner the next day and put to death to celebrate the accession of the new ruler of Hindustan. Shēr Shah died giving thanks to God for the victory. He was buried at Sahserām, on his family estate, in a stately mausoleum, one of the finest monuments of the Muhammadan period in India, which in its stern grandeur is eloquent of one of the strong men of Islam, a typical Musalman war-lord.

These great royal tombs, the Muhammadan counterpart of the Indo-Aryan stūpa, all bear the stamp of the men whose fame they celebrate. They were built in one of the pleasure-gardens where their royal owners passed their hours of recreation, a terrestrial paradise which death consecrated as holy ground. And though forbidden by his creed to make for himself a graven image the Musalman monarch took so much interest in the planning of his last resting-place that unconsciously he gave it the impress of his own character, and the builders formed it after his own image with as much care as the court painters drew his portrait. Thus the mausoleum together with the personal memoirs, the chronicles of the

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court historian, and the portraits of the court miniature painter help to provide material for the study of the cult of individualism which made Muhammadan history. But from the artistic standpoint the Indo-Muhammadan tomb belongs to Indian tradition as much as the stūpa, the royal tomb of the Aryan kings. Its symbolism is precisely the same as that of the stūpa, and the monuments of Indo-Aryan and Indo-Muhammadan kings were both the creations of the royal craftsmen of India.

If Shēr Shah had transmitted his own strength of character to his grandchildren Humāyūn would hardly have found the opportunity for recovering his lost kingdom, and the history of the Mogul dynasty in India would have ended with the battle of Kanauj in 1540. But the Muhammadan cult of individualism was absolutely inconsistent with the hereditary principle of monarchy, and the efforts of Musalman monarchs to reconcile their personal and dynastic interests with the political ideals of Islam only led to chronic unrest and invariably ended in dismal failure. Shēr Shah had appointed his eldest son, 'Adil Khan, as his heir, but he was a weakling and was forced to abdicate in favour of his brother, Jalāl Khan. Muhammadan politicians never recognised any dynastic rights unless they were maintained by force of arms. When one of Shēr Shah's generals urged the claims of 'Adil Khan as the rightful heir he was answered by the other grandees: "What advice is this? No one obtains a kingdom by inheritance; it belongs to whoever can gain it by the sword." [1]

Jalāl Khan, who assumed the name of Salīm Shah, inherited some of Shēr Shah's capacity, and after some disturbances caused by 'Adil Khan's faction seated himself firmly on his father's throne by the usual method of exterminating many of his nearest relatives and those of the nobles whom he distrusted. During his reign, which lasted eight years, Humāyūn remained under the protection of the Persian court and did not venture to cross swords with the Afghan 'usurpers,' as the Mogul chroniclers chose to regard the representatives of

[1] *Tārikh-i Dāūdī*, Elliot, vol. iv, p. 487.

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the line of Sūr. So Salīm Shah's reign was for the most part free from serious political commotion, except for some disturbances caused by a Muslim revivalist named Shaikh 'Alāī, who preached a form of socialism based upon the Qurān and posed as the expected Mahdi who at the close of the Muhammadan millennium was to appear as the herald of the Day of Judgment. He gained many converts by his eloquence, and his enthusiastic followers took upon themselves to turn the sword of Islam against all who contravened their chosen system of social ethics. The court mullās, however, did not accept this proceeding as good Muhammadan logic, and were shocked at the Shaikh's lack of respect for royalty, so they condemned him to death as a heretic. Salīm Shah was magnanimous enough to commute the sentence to banishment to a remote part of his dominions. The Shaikh nevertheless persisted in his seditious propaganda, and at last died when the punishment of the lash was being inflicted upon him. His followers gradually dispersed, so this interesting socialistic experiment, like many others, ended in failure. The Mahdawi movement, however, continued to agitate the mind of Islam for a long time afterwards.

Salīm Shah died in 1553, and was followed by his brother-in-law, Muhammad Khān, who murdered Salīm's eldest son, a boy of twelve, and thus cleared the way for his own succession to the throne. Under the title of Muhammad 'Adil Shah, or 'Adili Shah, he soon won for himself the nickname of *Andli*—'the Fool'—for he immediately began to dissipate the resources of his treasury in senseless prodigality, and in a very short time the whole of the political machinery so carefully built up by Shēr Shah, upon which his own power and prosperity depended, was completely disorganised. The Delhi Empire soon ceased to exist: it was again split up into five separate kingdoms at war with each other. Hēmū, a Hindu shopkeeper who had pushed his way to the front as 'Adil Shah's commander-in-chief, was the strongest and most capable of the competitors for power, but the prospect of a revival of Hindu supremacy was naturally distasteful to most Muham-

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TOMB OF SHĒR SHAH AT SAHSERĀM

30. TOMB OF HUMĀYŪN AT DELHI 446

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madans ; so while the different Afghan factions were contending with each other messengers were sent from Delhi and Agra inviting the exiled Mogul monarch in Persia to return and take possession of his throne.

Though Humāyūn's life as a political refugee at the Persian court had been far from pleasant, when he received the message he was in a dejected state of mind and hardly disposed to undertake new adventures. Shah Tahmāsp, who was an enthusiastic propagandist of Sufi doctrines, had accorded him ceremonial honour and lavish hospitality, but had lost no opportunity of reminding Humāyūn of his dependent position, and had exacted the most humiliating terms as the price of his assistance in recovering his throne. Though Humāyūn had been brought up as a Sunni he had been compelled by the Shah to sign a profession of the Shiah faith and to promise to propagate its doctrines in India and to give territorial compensation to Persia. With the aid of Persian troops he had taken Kabul and Kandahar from his brother Kāmrān, and had recovered possession of his son, Prince Akbar. But his hold upon the Afghans was most precarious. Repeated acts of treachery had at last driven him to put out Kāmrān's eyes. Mirza Hindal had been killed while fighting on Humāyūn's side. He had been reconciled again to Mirza Askarī, but immediately after a great feast held to celebrate the event Humāyūn had thrown him into prison. He even distrusted his staunchest adherent and right-hand man, Bairām Khan, who had stood loyally by his side during all the time of his exile from India and by his tact and diplomacy had smoothed the way in the difficult negotiations with the Shah.

In this mood Humāyūn fell back upon an old method of divination to settle his fate. He sent three horsemen out in different directions to take the names of the first three persons they might meet. The first returned and reported that he had met a traveller whose name was Daulat ('empire') ; the second declared that his man called himself Murād ('the object of desire') ; the third that he had met a villager whose name

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was Saadut ('good luck').[1] Humāyūn's spirits revived at this most auspicious augury. Though he had only 15,000 horse under his command, he set out from Kabul at the beginning of 1555 to recover possession of the Panjab. At Peshawar he was joined by Bairām Khan with a body of Mogul veterans, and by the old general's skilful strategy Humāyūn defeated the Afghan forces which opposed his advance, occupied Lahore, and re-entered Delhi in triumph fifteen years after his defeat at Kanauj.

The Afghan dynasty was overthrown, but Humāyūn did not live to recover all his former dominions. Six months afterwards he died from the effects of falling down a staircase in his palace at Delhi. Humāyūn was a wine-bibber, like Bābur, and indulged in opium. It is not improbable that the accident was primarily due to this cause, though Ferishta gives it a pious touch. Humāyūn, he says, was descending the stairs when the *muazzin*, or crier of the royal chapel, announced the hour of prayer. The Pādshah, according to custom, stood still, and having repeated the creed sat down on the second step until the crier had finished. As he rose and tried to support himself on the staff he held in his hand it slipped on the polished steps and he fell headlong over the parapet. He was taken up unconscious, and though he soon recovered his senses the injuries he had received proved fatal four days afterwards.

Humāyūn died at the beginning of 1556, in the forty-ninth year of his age. Including the years of exile, he had reigned twenty-five years. His shallowness and defects of character were covered by the saving grace of cheerfulness. Like most of the Great Moguls, he was for his intimate friends a prince of good fellows. He was never wanting in personal courage, but the restoration of the Mogul dynasty was more due to the steadfast loyalty of his comrades and to the weakness of Shēr Shah's descendants than to his own military capacity. The contrast between Shēr Shah and Humāyūn could not be better illustrated than it is in the two great monuments which

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. ii, pp. 172–173.

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perpetuate their memory. Humāyūn's mausoleum at Delhi portrays in its polished elegance the facile *charmeur* and rather superficial dilettante of the Persian school, whose best title to fame is that he was the father of Akbar ; Shēr Shah's at Sahserām the stern, strong man, egotist and empire-builder, who trampled all his enemies underfoot and ruled Hindustan with a rod of iron.

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CHAPTER XV

AKBAR: THE PROTECTORATE OF BAIRĀM KHAN

AT the time of Humāyūn's death Bairām Khan was occupied in completing the conquest of the Panjab on behalf of his sovereign, who was represented by the young Prince Akbar, then only thirteen years old. If he had so willed it the Khan could have found plenty of precedents, reckoned sound by Muhammadan opinion of the time, for using the opportunity to get rid of his youthful commander-in-chief and for making a bid for supreme power for himself. It says much for the loyalty of his character that he was proof against the temptation, and immediately joined with the other officers in proclaiming Akbar as Pādshah of Hindustan, though he himself, by Akbar's wish, retained the position given him by Humāyūn as the Prince's guardian, and during Akbar's minority exercised full power of sovereignty under the title of Khan Bāba, or Protector.

Akbar had been reared in the camp from the day of his birth. At five years of age, when Humāyūn was besieging Kabul, he had been exposed to the shot from his father's cannon by his vindictive uncle Kāmrān. His playfellows had been the tough old campaigners to whom warfare was the breath of life, and by the time he had entered his teens he was an expert in the management of elephants, horses, and camels, and skilled in the use of arms. Nevertheless it was well for the Mogul dynasty that he had such a powerful supporter by his side in this critical time, for Humāyūn had by no means disposed of all his adversaries before he died. Hindustan was not only distracted by the struggles of the numerous competitors for the throne of Delhi. Soon after Akbar's accession a great

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famine occurred, followed by an epidemic of plague which devastated most of the cities of Northern India. The news of Humāyūn's death had inspired the Governor of Kabul to revolt, and Hēmū, 'Adili Shah's commander-in-chief, now practically master in Bengal, was still in the field and already advancing from Chunar towards Agra with an army of thirty thousand men, gathering strength on his march from the numerous enemies of the Mogul cause. Hēmū, as a Hindu, was popular with the Indian masses, and none of the predatory races settled in India liked the appearance of more competitors in the field they regarded as their own.

Before Bairām could come to the rescue Agra had fallen. Hēmū energetically followed up this first success by laying siege to Delhi, where the main body of the Mogul army was concentrated. The Governor, Tardi Bēg Khan, without waiting for reinforcements, sallied out to attack the enemy, but was defeated and fled to Sirkind. The city surrendered, and Hēmū, assuming the title of Vikrāmāditya, was proclaimed sovereign ruler of Hindustan. In spite of his position as the avowed champion of Hinduism Hēmū had secured the alliance of a number of Afghan chieftains, and with an army now augmented to over one hundred thousand men was preparing to push on to Lahore with the intention of annihilating Bairām's forces and the last hope of the Mogul dynasty. The Moguls, including the remnants of the garrison of Agra and Delhi, did not muster many more than twenty thousand men, and almost all of Akbar's officers, alarmed at the reports of Hēmū's triumphant progress, were in favour of a retreat to Kabul. But Bairām Khan, supported by Akbar, resolutely opposed such a feeble step, which would have been fatal to the prospects of the house of Timūr. *Pour encourager les autres* he gave orders for the arrest and summary execution of the late Governor of Delhi, Tardi Bēg, on a charge of misconduct in the face of the enemy, and then marched out rapidly to meet Hēmū. Fortune favoured the resolute Turkish general, for a large body of cavalry which he sent out to reconnoitre surprised an Afghan force in charge of Hēmū's artillery and captured the whole of it. This was

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disastrous for the Hindu cause. The two main forces met on the historic field of Pānipat. Hēmū endeavoured to make up for the loss of his guns by a furious charge of elephants, and almost broke the Mogul centre, but in the crisis of the battle he was shot in the eye by an arrow and fell back in his howdah insensible. His body-guard began to waver at the sight of his fall, and before he recovered his army was routed by a charge of the Mogul cavalry. Hēmū himself was taken prisoner and brought to Akbar's tent in a pitiable plight. Bairām Khan was anxious that his royal *protégé* should win for himself the title of Ghāzī, or 'Champion of the Faith,' by slaying the infidel on the spot, but the more chivalrous Akbar had scruples against killing a wounded prisoner and merely touched Hēmū's head with his sword, whereupon Bairām drew his own weapon and cut down his brave opponent, leaving his attendants to finish off the business.

Hēmū's death and the rout of his army, which took place ten months after Akbar's accession, gave the Moguls possession of Delhi and Agra and disposed of the Pādshah's most formidable rival; but the Afghans in the Panjab and in Bengal still refused to acknowledge his supremacy. A nephew of Shēr Shah, Sikandar Sūr, fought Akbar's army in the Panjab for eight months longer before he surrendered on condition of being allowed to retire to Bengal, where Muhammad 'Adili Shah still exercised a nominal sovereignty. By the successful conclusion of the Panjab campaign Bairām Khan's work was accomplished and Bābur's grandson was firmly seated on the throne of Delhi. But Akbar, now growing into manhood and active both in mind and body, soon began to find the tutelage of his faithful but rather domineering guardian growing more and more irksome. Bairām Khan's attachment to the house of Timūr was a family tradition of several generations. He had been a close friend of Akbar's father long before Akbar was born, and his loyalty towards Humāyūn's son was above suspicion. Akbar, however, was as strong-willed as his Protector, more liberal in his views, and of far greater mental capacity; and as the young Pādshah became conscious of his own strength

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he resented more and more Bairām's fatherly control and his somewhat high-handed proceedings. The Protector was a politician of Shēr Shah's type, a strict disciplinarian, and very jealous of Akbar's youthful friendships and of any favours which the Pādshah might bestow upon others without consulting him.

Bairām's many enemies at court—among whom must be reckoned one of Akbar's nurses, Māham Anaga, to whom the Pādshah was much attached—were not slow to use every occasion for fomenting the feeling of irritation on both sides, and a trifling incident at last brought about a serious quarrel between Akbar and the Protector. Akbar, who was of strong physique and fond of all manly sports, was amusing himself with an elephant fight when two of the animals got out of control, broke out of the enclosure, and stampeded Bairām's camp close by—one of them running over the ropes of the regent's tents and putting his life in danger. The Khan, in spite of Akbar's protestations that the affair was purely accidental, chose to feel insulted and ordered the mahout of the offending elephant, one of Akbar's personal servants, to instant execution. For some time there was a feeling of coldness between the Protector and the Pādshah, but the latter soothed Bairām's ruffled feelings by giving him in marriage a niece of Humāyūn's, Sulima Sultāna Bēgam, according to an arrangement made in his father's lifetime. A reconciliation took place, but not long afterwards Bairām Khan, much to Akbar's disgust, put to death one of the grandees of the court on account of some real or imaginary offence and proceeded to take vengeance on one of the Pādshah's intimate friends, formerly one of his own *protégés*.

This was a mullā named Pīr Muhammad, half soldier and half scholar, who had been appointed by the Protector as Akbar's tutor and had acquired considerable influence over his royal pupil's mind. He was, however, a man of unscrupulous character; and, having wormed himself into the Pādshah's favour, had grown insolent both towards the other courtiers and towards his former patron. At length he grossly offended

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the Protector when the latter paid a visit to his house, by making him wait at the entrance. This so enraged the Khan that without consulting Akbar he put the mullā in prison and appointed another tutor in his place. Akbar was furious, but did not take any decided step to free himself from the Protector's control until the whole court was suffering from Bairām's irritable temper. Then Akbar, after consulting with Māham Anaga and some of his intimate friends, took the opportunity of a hunting party, when the Protector's vigilant eye was not watching him, to ride off to Delhi, ostensibly to pay a visit to his mother, who was ill. A few days after his arrival he issued a proclamation announcing that he had taken the supreme government into his own hands and requiring all his subjects in future to obey no orders from the court except those issued in his own name and under the imperial seal.

Bairām Khan, realising that he had gone too far, sent two confidential messengers to Delhi with assurances of his unabated loyalty towards the Throne; but Akbar, determined to show that he was now master, took the suggestion of some of his courtiers and, instead of admitting them to an audience, ordered them to be seized and imprisoned. Bairām Khan's pride was deeply wounded by this unexpected treatment, and still more by the inevitable effect upon his prestige at court. In the first outburst of his wrath he meditated an attempt to reassert his authority over the Pādshah's person by force, but, thinking better of such flagrant disloyalty, he withdrew from Agra with the intention of annexing one or other of the provinces which as yet did not acknowledge the suzerainty of Akbar and making a little kingdom for himself. He first tried Mālwā, but his former friends in that quarter upon whose assistance he relied turned their backs upon him. Then, thinking he would try to drive the Afghans from Bengal and establish himself there, he turned in that direction, but before he had gone far he gave up the plan as hopeless. Thwarted in all his ambitions, the disappointed Khan took the resolution to make a pilgrimage to Mekka, the last refuge of the pious Musalman, and set out for the seaport in Gujerat from whence

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he should embark. On the way another idea occurred to him—to try his fortunes in the Panjab, the province which he had conquered for Humāyūn, and where, although it was now a part of Akbar's dominions, he might expect to find better support from those who owed their positions to his patronage. He consequently halted at Nāgaur, in Rājputāna, and began to collect an army for that purpose.

Akbar, as soon as he heard of the recalcitrant Khan's intentions, sent a peremptory order formally dismissing him from office and directing him to proceed at once on his pilgrimage: "It being our intention henceforth to govern our people by our own judgment, let our well-wisher withdraw from all worldly concerns and, retiring to Mekka, far removed from the toils of public life, spend the rest of his days in prayer." Bairām Khan submitted, not with goodwill but because, like the English King's great Chancellor thirty years before this time, he saw the downfall of all his hopes and ambitions. Most of his retainers, seeing that Akbar's star was in the ascendant, were deserting the fallen Protector. "Of all those who abandoned him at this time, most had been his associates and attendants for many years, and owed everything to his favour; but all obligations were in a moment forgotten; and on the occasion of leaving him they even carried with them most of his camels and camp equipage." [1] Bairām replied to the Pādshah's message by returning all his insignia of office—his banners, drums, and elephants—and, having completed the preparations for his departure, dismissed the rest of his retainers except a faithful few who refused to leave their old master. Then he moved towards the coast, but with an unsettled mind, still brooding over his grievances.

Akbar, who was now in the Panjab and on the alert, bestowed the insignia returned by Bairām upon his foster-father, Atgah Khan, and ordered Pīr Muhammad to follow Bairām to the coast and see him embark for Mekka. Pīr Muhammad himself had been under orders from the Protector to undertake the pilgrimage, and was actually on his way when he received

[1] Ferishta, Briggs' translation, vol. ii, p. 200.

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news of Bairām's fall, and instantly hastened back to court. Akbar was pleased at his tutor's return and conferred upon him the title of Khan. Bairām, irritated beyond measure by the favours bestowed upon his former dependents and avowed enemies, collected an army and marched into the Panjab, but was again disappointed in his expectations of help from his friends. He was defeated by the imperial army under the command of Atgah Khan, and soon found himself hunted out of the plains into the hills. As soon as Akbar assumed command of the army in person Bairām was constrained to throw himself upon the Pādshah's mercy. Akbar not only despatched a messenger assuring him of forgiveness, but endeavoured to mitigate the humiliation of his position by sending a deputation of the grandees of the court to conduct him to the imperial presence with every mark of distinction. When he arrived at Lahore, where Akbar was holding his court, Bairām Khan, himself little disposed to tenderness towards those who had offended him, was touched at Akbar's gracious reception and threw himself in tears at his sovereign's feet. Akbar instantly raised him up and made him take his former place on his right hand at the head of the grandees of the empire. Then he invested him with a splendid robe of honour, and, addressing the ex-Protector in dignified words, offered him three alternatives. If he preferred a military command he might have the governorship of one of the imperial provinces. If he chose to remain at court, he should be treated with the highest honour as the benefactor of the imperial house. But if he felt more disposed to seek retirement in a religious life, he should be escorted on his pilgrimage to Mekka in a "manner suitable to his rank." Bairām replied humbly that, having once lost his sovereign's confidence, he could not wish to continue to serve him. "The clemency of the Pādshah is enough, and his forgiveness is more than a reward for my former services. Let me, therefore, turn my thoughts from this world to another and be permitted to proceed to the Holy Shrine." Akbar approved of his decision, assigned to him a liberal pension and a suitable escort, and then returned to Agra.

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Whether Bairām Khan's intentions were sincere or not—and one can hardly imagine that the tough old campaigner would have found consolation in the *rôle* of a religious devotee—he never reached Mekka. He set out for the third time on his penitential pilgrimage; but on his way, after spending a pleasant evening with his friends on one of the lakes of Rājputāna, near Alwar, he was waylaid by a party of Afghans, one of whom, while pretending to salute him, drew his dagger and stabbed him to the heart. The motive of the crime was said to be that the Khan had killed the Afghan's father in battle many years before, but there appears to have been a woman in the case who had attached herself to Bairām's suite and was the cause of the trouble. Akbar took Bairām's widow and her boy of four years under his protection. The former eventually entered the Pādshah's seraglio. Bairām's son had a very distinguished career in the imperial army, and was father-in-law to Akbar's son, Prince Dāniyāl.

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CHAPTER XVI

AKBAR AS RULER OF ĀRYĀVARTA

THE death of the fighting Khan was the close of the first chapter of Akbar's reign. The young Pādshah had proved both his strength of mind and generosity of temperament in the duel with his former guardian, but this did not deter other truculent generals in the Mogul army from defying his authority and asserting the divine right conferred by the sword of Islam. And Humāyūn's unfortunate reign was a warning to Akbar of the dangers which threatened him from other quarters; for the Moguls were still regarded as foreigners in India, and neither Hindus nor Muhammadans were willing to recognize them as their rulers except under compulsion. It required both military genius and the highest statesmanship to establish the Mogul dynasty upon a stable foundation, and Akbar soon showed that he was not lacking in either. His exceptional physical strength and prowess both as a fighter and big-game hunter gave him a great reputation among his soldiers. Trained to arms on the battlefield from early boyhood, he had already shown that in strategic capacity and practical knowledge of war he was inferior to none of his generals. He inherited his father's and grandfather's personal charm and knew how to win both the affection of his subjects and the respect of his enemies. Above all, he had a high sense of honour and justice and was singularly free from sectarian prejudices. Like the ideal Hindu sovereign, he made himself accessible to all, was most conscientious in the conduct of State affairs, respected all religious sects, and, like Asoka, never thought that he honoured his own "by disparaging that of another man for trivial reasons."

Nevertheless it needed all of Akbar's great gifts and his

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31. AKBAR ENTERTAINED BY HIS FOSTER-BROTHER 458

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most strenuous exertions during a long reign to overcome the difficulties which former Musalman governments had bequeathed to him, to exact a willing obedience to his rule from the great majority of his subjects, and to weld into a political synthesis the many different racial elements which had been contending for empire in India since the beginning of the Muhammadan invasions. Akbar, like Husain Shah before him, devoted himself to the study of Hindu philosophy, and even made a bold attempt to bridge over the gulf between the two great religious parties of his empire. But he was neither a religious enthusiast of Asoka's type nor a secularist in politics. He held rather to the political ideal of the Mahābhārata—"the Heavens are centred in the ethics of the State."

It was in 1560 that Akbar took into his own hands the reins of government, though he remained for two years longer under the influence of Māham Anaga and other associates of his boyhood. The territories in which he was undisputed ruler by that time included, roughly, the Panjab and the present United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, besides the fortresses of Ajmīr and Gwalior in Rājputāna. The Afghans in Bengal, under the leadership of a son of 'Adili Shāh, Shēr Shah II, now made an attempt to recover Delhi, but were decisively defeated by the Mogul army under the command of Khan Zamān-i-Shaibāni, one of Humāyūn's best generals. The Khan, however, after his victory showed an insubordinate disposition by neglecting to send to Agra the elephants captured from the enemy, which were a part of the Pādshah's share of the spoils. Akbar consequently was compelled to march towards Jaunpur to bring his refractory general to order. As soon as Khan Zamān heard of the Pādshah's approach he thought better of his disloyal intentions and advanced to pay his respects to his sovereign, bringing not only the elephants but the rest of the booty, as well as other propitiatory offerings. Khan Zamān had played a distinguished part in the battle of Pānipat and had rendered great services to the house of Timūr previously. Akbar, therefore, passed over his general's offence with a gentle reprimand, returned him everything except that which

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belonged of right to the Crown, and shortly afterwards confirmed him in the governorship of Jaunpur, where he had already amassed a great fortune.

Very soon afterwards Akbar was called upon to deal with a similar case of insubordination. Another general, Adham Khan Atka, the son of Māham Anaga, had been appointed to the command of an army sent by Akbar for the conquest of Mālwā, an undertaking which promised to be easy, for Bāz Bahādur, the Afghan ruler, was wholly absorbed by his passion for his lovely Hindu mistress, Rūpmati. Though informed of the approach of the Mogul army, Bāz Bahādur made no attempt to oppose it until it had arrived within twenty miles of Sarangpur. Then he was roused from his love dreams, and marched out, accompanied by Rūpmati. His troops were routed at the first onset of the Moguls. Bāz Bahādur saved himself by flight, but the fair poetess became Adham Khan's prize. Her tragic end has been already told. The Mogul general, elated by his victory, made a lavish distribution of the spoil to enhance his popularity with his soldiers, but appropriated to himself the royal ensigns and a great part of the treasure which should have been sent to Agra. Akbar lost no time in marching into Mālwā at the head of the imperial army before his general had time to proceed to open rebellion. Adham Khan obtained pardon by prompt submission, but was superseded in his command by Pīr Muhammad. The latter continued the campaign successfully for a time, until his barbarous treatment of the inhabitants of Mālwā, both Hindu and Musalman, strengthened the cause of Bāz Bahādur so much that the latter was enabled, with the help of the ruler of Khāndēsh, to chase the Moguls out of his dominions. Pīr Muhammad was drowned while his defeated army was crossing the Narbadā. To retrieve these disasters Akbar sent another army under the command of one of his Uzbek generals, Abdulla Khan, who at last captured Mandu and again compelled Bāz Bahādur to take to the hills. The campaign ended, as before stated, in Bāz Bahādur's submission. Akbar subsequently gave him a command in the imperial army.

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In spite of Akbar's tact and firmness the unruly spirit of his officers still continued to manifest itself. Abdulla Khan quickly followed the example of his predecessor in the governorship of Mālwā by an attempt at rebellion, which Akbar frustrated by marching against him and compelling him after some fighting to take refuge in Gujerat. Shortly afterwards a tragedy which occurred in the precincts of the imperial palace at Agra gave fresh proof of the ungovernable temper of the Pādshah's retainers. Adham Khan, whom Akbar had kept at court after his misconduct as a general, was jealous of the promotion of another of the companions of Akbar's boyhood, an old Afghan general named Muhammad Atgah Khan, who had assisted in suppressing Bairām Khan's revolt and had lately been appointed *Vakil*, or Prime Minister. He accordingly entered into a conspiracy with several other courtiers to get rid of him. One night when Atgah Khan was sitting with other grandees of the court—some of whom were in the plot—in the Diwān-i-Khās, Adham Khan appeared with a few of his retainers. All excepting the Vakil, who was reading the Qurān, rose to greet him. Adham Khan, pretending to be mortally offended, took out his dagger and stabbed the minister to the heart. He then went, dagger in hand, towards the Pādshah's private apartments, adjoining the audience chamber. Akbar, who had been roused from sleep by the noise, looked out and saw the body of Atgah Khan weltering in blood on the floor. Seizing his sword, he went after the assassin, who turned and fled up a staircase, but was seized by the palace attendants. Akbar's first impulse was to avenge his minister's death with his own sword, but Adham Khan, presuming on his intimacy with the Pādshah, caught hold of his arms and begged him to inquire into the cause of the quarrel. Akbar shook him off in disgust and ordered the attendants to throw him down from the terraced roof of the palace. Adham Khan's mother, Māham Anaga, died of grief on hearing of the punishment of her son, and Akbar had them both buried in a tomb he built for them at Delhi.

This tragic event, which took place in 1561, helped to open

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the Pādshah's eyes to the evil influence of his intimates in the imperial household. His marriage with a Rajput princess in the previous year had brought a better atmosphere into the inner circles of the court and served to turn his mind from the allurements of sport and adventure into more intellectual channels. It also had important political consequences, in bringing him into closer touch with the Hindu aristocracy and enlisting their sympathy with the Mogul cause. In 1560 Akbar had gone to Ajmīr on one of his periodical visits to the shrine of a Muslim saint. Shortly afterwards a Rajput of the royal family of Ambēr, Rāja Bihārī Mall, gave him his daughter in marriage, Akbar celebrating the occasion by enrolling the Rāja and his son, Bhagwān Dās, among the nobles of his court.

Rāja Bihārī Mall had been known to Akbar from the first year of his reign. A slight incident which had occurred when he was presented at court had given the Pādshah a favourable impression of the Rajputs. Akbar was still a boy, and in a boyish spirit of adventure had mounted an untrained elephant, which became restive when the Rāja's retinue appeared. Akbar's own attendants made way for the unruly animal, but the Rajputs remained immovable by the side of their chieftain. The Rāja became Akbar's fast friend, and after his daughter's marriage was made a grandee of the empire, with the command of five thousand horse. His son, Rāja Bhagwān Dās, and the latter's nephew, Rāja Mān Singh, also joined the imperial service. This was the beginning of the devoted attachment of the Rajputs to the Mogul dynasty. Akbar showed his appreciation of their loyalty by giving them some of the highest commands in his army, and they proved themselves wholly worthy of his confidence. The Rāja Bhagwān Dās once saved Akbar's life in battle, and was given the title of Amīr-al-Umāra, or Chief Grandee of the Empire. Rāja Mān Singh was eventually raised to the command of seven thousand horse—a distinction which Akbar only conferred upon his third son, Prince Dāniyāl, and subsequently on two Musalman generals.

Akbar was a much-married man. According to Mogul

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tradition, if the Pādshah fell in love with a married woman her husband was bound to set her free immediately by giving her a divorce. Akbar occasionally exercised this sovereign right over his Musalman subjects, and several Hindu princes ratified political alliances by giving him a daughter in marriage. The imperial harem was consequently extensive. The whole establishment, says Abul Fazl, numbered over five thousand women, each with a separate apartment. The daughter of Rāja Bihārī Mall was known by her Muhammadan name, Mariam Zamāni. She and her brother always had great influence at court. Mariam was the mother of Akbar's son and heir, Prince Salīm, afterwards known as Jahāngīr. Her palace at Fatehpur-Sikri,[1] adjoining the Great Mosque built by Akbar, was planned according to the royal palaces of Rājputāna and contained a Hindu chapel—a striking proof of Akbar's broad-minded tolerance in religious matters, for it was an open defiance not only of the traditions of the house of Timūr, but of all orthodox Musalman opinion, to permit the practice of infidel superstitions in the precincts of the imperial palace. Akbar, however, did not allow personal sympathies to stand in the way of his political plans. While he was laying the foundations of his great scheme for reconciling the religious differences which divided Hindu from Musalman his armies were actively engaged in the attempt to break down the political independence of those Hindu states in Rājputāna which had survived the repeated attacks of other Musalman conquerors. Before leaving Ajmīr with his Rajput bride he had made arrangements with the Governor—his brother-in-law, Mirza Sharif-ud-dīn Husain—for the siege of the fortress of Mirthā, in the territory of Udai Singh, Rāna of Mewār. This operation occupied the Mogul army during the greater part of 1561. The place was stoutly defended by two Rajput chieftains, the Rājas Jai Mall and Devi Dās, but after a long siege the systematic mining operations of the Mogul engineers

[1] Now known as Jodh Bāi's palace, possibly after Jahāngīr's Rajput wife, the daughter of the Rāja of Jodhpur. See *Handbook to Agra and the Tāj*, by the author.

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made breaches in the walls, and the garrison was reduced to a state of famine. Jai Mall accepted the terms offered by the Mogul general—to surrender their money and effects and to march out with their horses and arms. The other chieftain refused, and after the usual *jauhār* made a desperate effort with five hundred of his followers to cut his way through the besiegers. Half of that number succeeded, carrying off the head of their chieftain so that the funeral rites might be duly performed.

Mīrthā fell in the early part of 1562. Akbar was compelled to postpone further operations on account of the continued insubordination of his generals. Sharif-ud-dīn, soon after his success in Rājputāna, joined other malcontents and went into revolt. The army which Akbar sent against him suffered a heavy defeat, but eventually the rebel general was driven to take refuge in Gujerat, where he continued to intrigue against his sovereign. The Uzbek officers in Bengal, instigated by Abdulla Khan and by Khan Zamān, whose previous offence had been overlooked by Akbar, then stirred up the hostility of the Afghans to Mogul rule. It took Akbar more than two years to reduce these turbulent Musalman subjects to order. In the interval a part of the imperial forces in Rājputāna was engaged in the conquest of the principality of Garrah, in Central India, where the wealth and fame of the Rānī Dūrgāvati had excited the cupidity of the neighbouring Mogul governor, Asaf Khan. The Rānī, who, as before mentioned,[1] had put to flight Bāz Bahādur's army, marched out at the head of her troops to oppose the invaders, but in the battle which followed Asaf Khan won a decisive victory, after Dūrgāvati had been disabled by an arrow in her eye and had stabbed herself with a dagger rather than become a prisoner of the Musalman. The rich spoils captured by Asaf Khan included a number of gold and silver images and a hundred jars of gold coins. As usual, the Mogul general was loth to part with his booty, and Akbar was compelled to resort to compulsion to obtain the dues of the imperial treasury.

[1] *Supra*, p. 355.

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AKBAR AS RULER

It was to be expected that among the motley horde of enemies gathered round Akbar there would be some who would not shrink from using every means, fair or foul, to get rid of him. At the time of Sharif-ud-dīn's revolt, while Akbar was riding through the suburbs of Delhi, a horseman who had been in the general's service joined the imperial retinue unobserved, and, while pretending to aim at a bird in the sky, suddenly lowered his weapon and shot the Emperor in the shoulder. The wound, fortunately, was not dangerous for a man of Akbar's robust constitution, and when the arrow had been extracted and justice had been done the Pādshah proceeded on his journey. The criminal, who had been seized, was put to death immediately, Akbar refusing to allow him to be tortured in order to extract the names of his accomplices, on the ground that evidence of that kind was worthless and more likely to incriminate the innocent than the guilty. Perhaps the Pādshah did not like his brother-in-law to be implicated in the dastardly deed; in any case the outrage only added to the discomfiture of Akbar's enemies and served to enhance his prestige among all right-thinking Musalmans.[1]

In 1563 Akbar increased his popularity with his Hindu subjects, many of whom were now his most loyal adherents, by abolishing all taxes on pilgrims. Some years afterwards he also abolished the oppressive *jizya*, or poll-tax on unbelievers, which from the days of the Prophet had been a sacrosanct institution in Muhammadan finance. From 1564 to 1567 Akbar was chiefly occupied in quelling the revolt of his Uzbek officers led by Khan Zamān and Asaf Khan. He effected his purpose partly by consummate diplomacy and partly by military strategy. Though fully conscious how little reliance was to be placed upon his shifty antagonists' professions of submission, his policy was, whenever possible, to placate them by generous treatment and at the same time to inspire them with respect for his power and indomitable will, rather than add to the number of his enemies by a studied exhibition of 'frightfulness.'

[1] Badāunī gives a slightly different account of the incident and connects it with Akbar's exercise of his royal prerogative with regard to matrimony.

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But in the last resort Akbar did not hesitate to inflict condign punishment upon the irreconcilables, according to the barbarous methods of the period.

After the imperial forces had suffered several reverses the revolt in Bengal was finally crushed by Akbar's taking command in person. With his usual vigour and determination he crossed the Ganges at nightfall, in spite of monsoon floods, and next morning at sunrise attacked the rebel army with a picked body of two thousand cavalry and elephants. The Uzbeks, believing themselves secure with the Ganges between them and the Mogul army, neglected all precautions, so that the sound of the Pādshah's war-drums was the first intimation they received of his approach. Nevertheless it was only by desperate fighting, in the course of which the arch-rebel Khan Zamān and several of his associates were killed, that Akbar succeeded in gaining a complete victory. Five of the rebel leaders who were taken prisoners suffered the punishment of traitors by being trodden to death by elephants. But Asaf Khan had previously obtained Akbar's pardon by submission and had regained the Pādshah's favour by taking an energetic part in suppressing the rebellion.

While these events were in progress Akbar's relatives—some of them living at Kabul and some under Akbar's protection in India—were, according to an old family tradition, stirring up more trouble for him. Kabul was nominally a part of Akbar's dominions, but it had never acknowledged his authority and continued to be a city of refuge for an unscrupulous gang of intriguers. Their manœuvres, however, did not give Akbar much anxiety, except for an ineffectual attempt on the part of his brother, Mirza Ḥakīm, to obtain possession of the Panjab. By the end of 1566 Akbar had broken most of his Mogul rivals and had commenced to strengthen his capital, with the aid of an army of skilled Indian masons, by building the present fort of Agra, on the site of an older one constructed by Salīm Shah, with its great walls seventy feet in height and imposing gateways.

He now felt himself free to renew the campaign in Rājputāna which had been broken off by Abdulla Khan Uzbek's revolt

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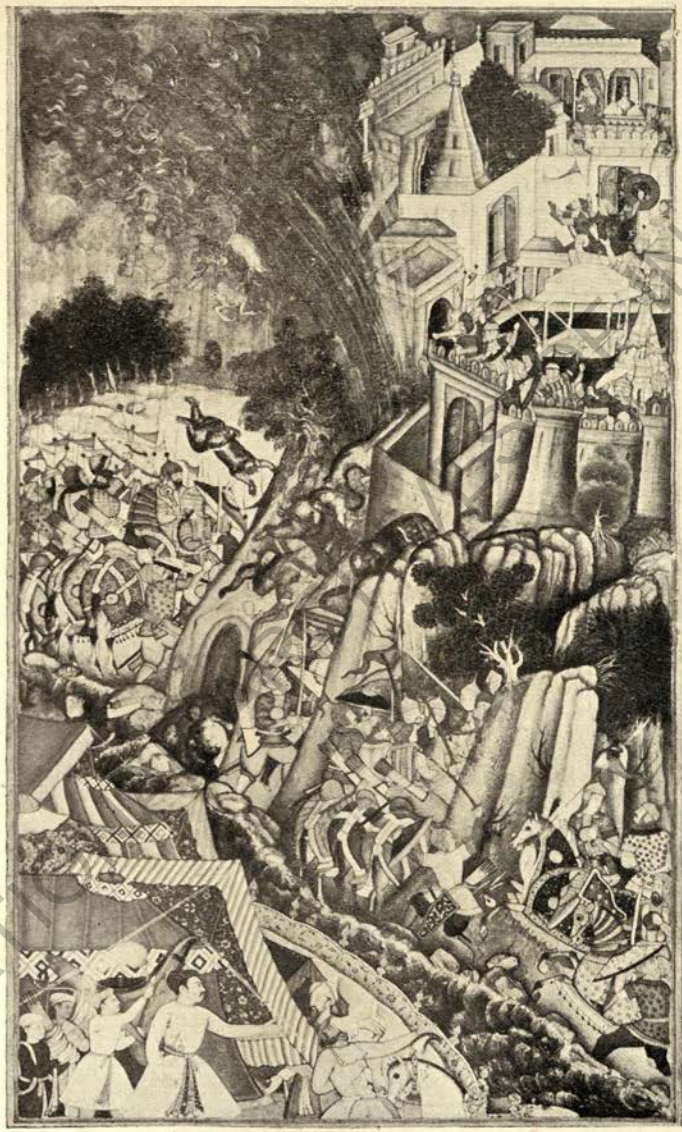

32. The Siege of Chitor 466

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and by other disturbances in the army. The time was favourable for the Mogul arms. The son and successor of the great Rāna Sanga, Udai Singh, who was now the premier prince of Rājputāna, lacked his father's energy and military skill. The military resources of the Rajputs had been greatly reduced in the struggle of centuries against the Musalman. Akbar had won over several of the most influential chieftains to his side and had gathered together a powerful and well-disciplined army, which in artillery and engineering equipment was immensely superior to the forces the Rajputs could bring into the field. The Rāna, on Akbar's approach, retired to the inaccessible hilly country which separated his territories from Gujerat, leaving a force of eight thousand Rajputs under the command of Rāja Jai Mall, the defender of Mīrthā, a brave and capable soldier, in charge of the stronghold of Chitor. Akbar in October 1567 proceeded to invest the fortress, employing five thousand skilled craftsmen in the engineering operations by which the walls were to be undermined.

The famous citadel, built upon a lofty spur of rock jutting out into the plains of Mewār, was a place of great natural strength. The garrison was provisioned for a long siege, and perennial springs within the walls gave an inexhaustible supply of water. But Akbar had under his command the best military engineers of the period, and though the Rajputs had the advantage of position and defended themselves with the courage of despair, they were unable to prevent the besiegers from gradually pushing their trenches nearer and nearer to the walls. Ferishta describes the scientific manner in which the siege was conducted: "The approaches were made by *sabat*, a description of defence for the besiegers peculiar to India. The *sabats* are constructed in the following manner: The zigzags, commencing at gunshot distance from the fort, consist of a double wall, and by means of blinds or stuffed gabions covered with leather the besiegers continue their approaches till they arrive near to the walls of the place to be attacked. The miners then proceed to sink their shafts and carry on their galleries underground for the construction of the mines, in which

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having placed the powder and blown up the works, the storming party rushes from the *sabat*, or superior galleries, and assaults the place."[1] Neither the material employed nor the method of its use was an invention of the Mogul engineers; both had been used in Indian warfare for at least a century previously. "On the present occasion," continues Ferishta, "two *sabats*, or superior galleries, having been constructed, two mines were carried under bastions at different spots, and they were both fired at the same time. It happened that one of them exploded before the other, and a practicable breach was formed. Two thousand men, prepared to storm, advanced immediately, under the supposition that both mines had been sprung, and the parties divided in order to enter both breaches at once. One of the mines, however, exploded only just as one of the parties got close over it, when five hundred men were killed, besides a number of the enemy who were crowded on the bastion."[2]

Both attacks consequently failed. The besiegers, who had lost fifteen officers and a considerable number of men, were disheartened by the disaster. But Akbar ordered other mines to be prepared and the siege was continued with renewed energy. At length, in February 1568, everything was ready for the final assault. One night, as Akbar was giving his orders, a flash of torchlight upon the fortress walls revealed the figure of Rāja Jai Mall directing the repair of the damage caused by the besiegers' mines. Snatching a matchlock from one of his attendants, Akbar fired at the Rajput general and shot him through the head. A cry of despair arose from the doomed citadel as the Rajputs bore the body of their gallant chieftain away. Akbar instantly prepared to take advantage of his success by ordering his troops to advance to the breaches, which, to their astonishment, they found undefended. At the first streak of dawn the besiegers clambered into the fortress almost unopposed, for most of the defenders had spent the last night of the siege in performing the funeral rites of their chieftain, his wives and many of the Rajput women sacrificing themselves in a vast pyre lighted in the basement of the palace.

[1] Briggs' translation, vol. ii, pp. 229–230. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 230–231.

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The fighting men had now retired within their temple walls to prepare for the forlorn hope of the Kshatriya warrior. Akbar, wishing to spare the lives of the brave Rajputs, summoned them to surrender, but as they refused to accept quarter he mounted his elephant and gave orders for the temples to be stormed. Many thousands of Rajputs fell in this last assault. Some cut their way through, and a considerable body saved themselves and their families by a clever ruse. They made a pretence of binding their own women and children as prisoners, and, seizing a favourable opportunity, marched quietly through the cordon of besiegers as if they were a detachment of Akbar's Rajput allies conducting their captives to the rear.

Probably they were inspired to make this attempt to save their families from sacrifice by the knowledge that Akbar some years previously had issued an order forbidding the usual Musalman practice of making slaves of prisoners of war; otherwise the Rajputs would hardly have run the risk of their falling into the hands of the Moguls. Akbar subsequently forbade the Rajput practice of forcing their widows to immolate themselves on the funeral-pile of their husbands, and personally interfered to save the daughter-in-law of the Rāja of Jodhpur when the latter was about to compel her to become a *sati*.

Several other Rajput chieftains after the fall of Chitor made their submission to Akbar, but the Rāna remained secure in his mountain fortresses and the royal line of Mewār steadfastly refused to follow the example of other Hindu princes by giving a daughter of the Sūryavamsa to the Great Mogul. Akbar returned in triumph to Agra, carrying with him as a trophy, instead of a bride, a pair of wooden gates taken from the fortress, which he set up in the zanāna of his own palace. The next year he took two other Rajput fortresses, Rantambhōr and Kālanjar. He also won another Rajput wife, the daughter of a chieftain of Bikanīr. About a year after the capture of Chitor, Mariam Zamāni presented Akbar with a son and heir. Akbar had been anxious regarding the succession to the throne, as her twin children, born previously, had died in infancy.

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When passing by Sikri, a village near Agra, he had consulted a famous Musalman hermit, the Shaikh Salīm Chishtī, on the matter. Acting on the latter's advice, Akbar made the place his headquarters, and nine months afterwards Mariam gave birth to a son, who was named Salīm in honour of the holy man in whose house he was born. The next year another son, Murād, was born in the same auspicious place. So Akbar determined to make Sikri a permanent place of residence, and commenced to build the now deserted city, called by the name of Fatehpur, 'the City of Victory,' after his successful campaign in Gujerat.

Fatehpur-Sikri was Akbar's capital for seventeen years, and it continues to be a splendid monument of his genius as a statesman and of the most eventful years of his reign. Here the Pādshah, when still a young man, gathered round him the ablest and most learned men of his time, who were his advisers and collaborators in reorganising the system of government and in carrying out his great schemes of political, social, and religious reform. The city itself even as it now stands, a fragment of its former self and without the charm which the splendid lake and the fine gardens must have given it, reveals to us a great deal of the mind of the greatest of the Great Moguls. It was planned by the royal city-builders of Rājputāna in Akbar's service on traditional Hindu lines, modified according to the Pādshah's own ideas. The Grand Mosque, the Jāmi' Masjid, towering high over the centre of the city, was built in honour of the holy man, the Shaihk Salīm, whose tomb of white marble, fantastically carved, glitters in the centre of the vast quadrangle. The mosque was finished in 1571, the magnificent triumphal gateway, the Buland Darwāza, being added some years afterwards to commemorate Akbar's conquest of the Dekhan. According to an inscription over the central arch, the mosque was intended to be a replica of the Grand Mosque at Mekka, but obviously it represents the Indian builders' conception of the holy shrine of Islam, for, like all Indian mosques, it is an adaptation of the Indo-Aryan building tradition to Muhammadan ritual.

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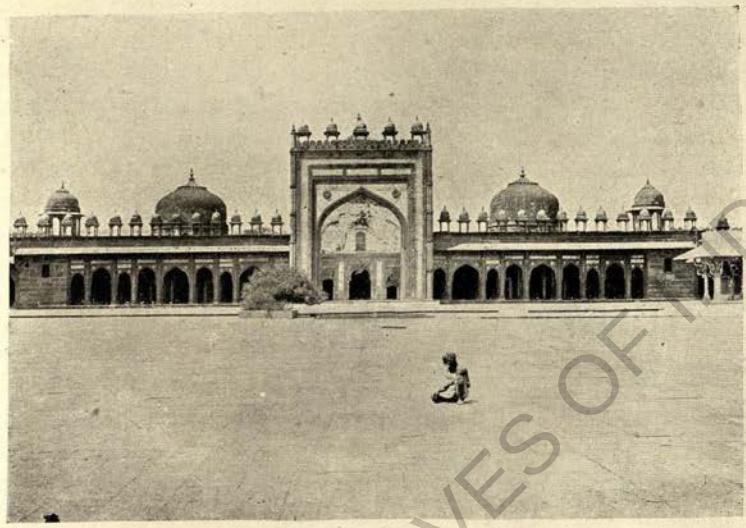
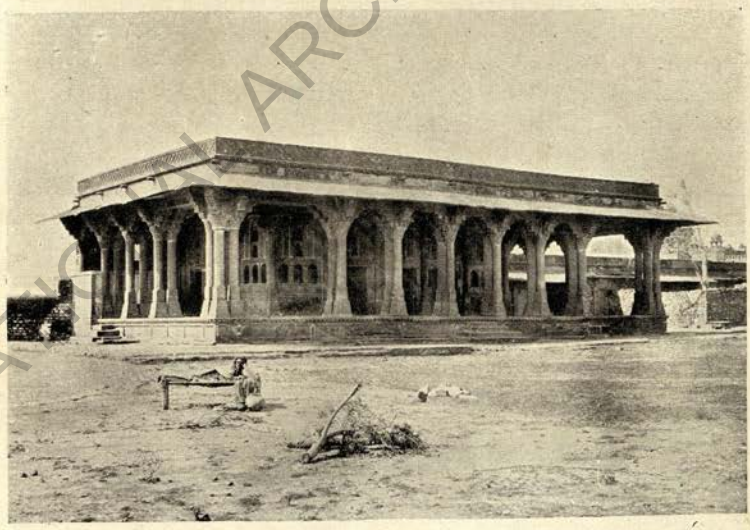


THE JĀMI MASJID, FATEHPUR-SIKRI



33. THE DAFTAR KHĀNA, FATEHPUR-SIKRI 470

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Under the shadow of the Jāmi' Masjid lived the two famous brothers Faizi and Abul Fazl, Akbar's most intimate Musalman friends and counsellors. Their father, the Shaikh Mubārak, was of Arab descent and reputed to be the most learned man in Islam. He had taken a prominent part in the discussion of a question which had been agitating the mind of Islam for a long time—the expected appearance of a new Prophet, or Māhdi, who at the end of the millennium of the Muhammadan era was to restore the pristine purity of the faith and prepare the way for the Day of Judgment. There had been many popular preachers who in the state of psychical exaltation induced by the discussion had come forward as the promised Māhdi, and Mubārak in his youth had attached himself to one of them, the Shaikh 'Alāī, who, as before mentioned, had been condemned as a heretic by the 'Ulamās of Islam (Salīm) Shah's court. After the death of Shaikh 'Alāī, Mubārak had established a school of divinity at Agra, but had incurred the enmity of the Sunni 'Ulamās by his unorthodox teaching and had fled from the city to save his life. In the first years of his reign Akbar, though little disposed to religious intolerance himself, had not interfered to prevent the 'Ulamās of Agra and Delhi, who were strict Sunnis, from persecuting those who showed Shiah tendencies, and Shaikh Mubārak suffered much from the machinations of his enemies at court. Faizi was the Shaikh's eldest son. Like his father, he was deeply versed in Arabic learning, and before he was twenty-one had made a reputation both as a poet and physician. In 1568, when Akbar was besieging Chitor, he received a summons to appear at court, and the young Emperor and the poet soon became fast friends. The Shaikh and his family were now safe from further persecution.

In the meantime Abul Fazl, Faizi's younger brother, under his father's instruction was throwing himself into the study of philosophy and religion with intense ardour, and found such delight "in passing nights in lonely spots with true seekers after the truth" that he had half resolved to spend his life as a wanderer, like the bhikku or sannyāsin, holding converse

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with the sages of Mongolia or the hermits of Lebanon, "with the lāmas of Tibet, with the Padris of Portugal," or sitting at the feet of the Parsis and the learned of the Zend-Avesta. But a few years after the foundation of Akbar's new capital Abul Fazl, at the age of seventeen, was likewise summoned to court, and his whole outlook upon life was altered. He found in Akbar not only the gracious sovereign and protector of his kinsfolk, but a kindred spirit. The Pādshah, when his active mind was not occupied with practical affairs of State, was deeply concerned with spiritual matters, and would often pass the morning alone in meditation, "sitting on a large flat stone of an old building which lay near the palace in a lonely spot, with his head bent over his chest and gathering the bliss of the early hours." When he arrived at his twentieth year Akbar confessed that his soul was filled with exceeding sorrow from the consciousness that he "lacked spiritual provision for the journey of life." "Although I am the master of so vast a kingdom and all the appliances of government are in my hands, yet since true greatness consists in doing the will of God, my mind is not at ease in this diversity of sects and creeds; and apart from this outward pomp of circumstance, with what satisfaction in my despondency can I undertake the sway of empire? I await the coming of some discreet man of principle who will resolve the difficulties of my conscience." [1]

Akbar detested the narrow sectarianism of the court 'Ulamās to whom he had to refer on questions of Muhammadan law and doctrine, but was to a great extent in their hands, for, owing perhaps to the vicissitudes of his boyhood, he could neither read nor write. As an 'illiterate,' he would have been disqualified in modern times for the humblest office of State, yet, as he himself observed in one of his pithy sayings, "the prophets were all illiterate." He was already highly educated in an Indian sense and the foremost statesman of his age. He had been taught by the traditional Indian oral method, and with the help of Faizi's and Abul Fazl's book-learning was

[1] *Aīn-i-Akbarī* ("The Sayings of His Majesty"), Jarrett's translation, vol. iii, p. 386.

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now in a position to meet the 'Ulamās on their own ground. The imperial library at Fatehpur, in charge of the two brothers, was filled with all the best Sanskrit, Hindu, Persian, Greek, Kashmīrian, and Arabic literature, either in originals or in translations made by experts under Akbar's orders. "Among books of renown," says Abul Fazl, "there are few that are not read in His Majesty's assembly hall; and there are no historical facts of the past ages, or curiosities of science, or interesting points of philosophy, with which His Majesty, a leader of impartial sages, is unacquainted." [1] Faizi continued to devote himself to literary pursuits. Akbar appointed him tutor to the imperial princes and made him his Persian Poet Laureate. Abul Fazl, soon after his presentation at court, became one of the leaders of the philosophical discussions which, as in the days of the Indo-Aryan monarchs, began to form one of the chief distractions of the Fatehpur court. He quickly rose to be one of the principal grandees of the empire, and eventually became Akbar's *Vazīr*, or Finance Minister.

Akbar himself from the time of the founding of Fatehpur seems to have openly adopted Indo-Aryan political and social ideals, so far as they were compatible with those of absolute monarchy. His throne, raised upon a Vishnu pillar in the Diwān-i-Khās, and approached by the four-went ways of the cosmic cross, was the traditional Hindu symbol of universal dominion. Though he honoured Musalman saints, like the Shaikh Salīm, and observed all the forms of Muslim ritual, he allowed absolute freedom of conscience to men of other creeds, and must have given grave offence to many of the true believers by permitting his Rajput Sultānas to perform their infidel rites within a stone's-throw of the Jāmi' Masjid. The small pavilion known as the Yogi's Seat, close to the Diwān-i-Khās, is said to have been built for one of the Hindu ascetics with whom Akbar was fond of conversing on metaphysical problems. The Jesuit Fathers from Goa were among those to whom Akbar listened with great attention. He allowed them to build a chapel at Agra, and once, it is said, came there alone,

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, vol. i, p. 103.

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removed his turban, and offered prayers, first kneeling in the Christian manner, then prostrating himself according to Musalman custom, and finally according to the form of Hindu ritual. It is also stated that he granted permission for the funeral of one of the Christian community to pass through the streets of Fatehpur with all the ceremonies of the Catholic faith, and that it was attended by many of the Muhammadan and Hindu inhabitants.

Akbar's thirst for knowledge was insatiable. He had all the works which his librarians translated into Persian read to him, and gave personal interviews to learned men of all denominations and sects—Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Brahmans, Zoroastrians, and Musalmans. "Night and day," says Badāunī, "people did nothing but inquire and investigate: profound points of science, the subtleties of revelation, the curiosities of history, the wonders of nature, of which large volumes could only give a summary abstract, were ever spoken of." Badāunī was a learned mullā of the strictly orthodox party whom Akbar appointed as one of his court *imāms*, or chaplains, on account of his beautiful voice. His history of Akbar's reign, written in secret and only brought to light many years afterwards, is all the more valuable as he was a bitter enemy of Abul Fazl and a very severe critic of his sovereign. Akbar enjoyed freedom of speech and delighted in the discomfiture of the narrow and pedantic divines who represented the Sunni faction at court. Soon after Abul Fazl's arrival at court Akbar built an *Ibādat-Khāna*, or Debating Hall, and every Thursday evening the Muhammadan courtiers and 'Ulamās met, under the presidency of the Pādshah, to discuss questions of Islamic law and doctrine. Philosophical debates, as we have seen, had always been the chief intellectual recreation at a Hindu court, but this was an innovation in Mogul court life not very pleasing to the old-fashioned mullās. In meeting the arguments of the younger generation of Islamic scholars, represented by Faizi and Abul Fazl, they often lost their tempers and "a horrid noise and confusion ensued." Once Akbar turned to Badāunī and ordered him to report any 'Ulamā who

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misbehaved or spoke nonsense, so that he (the Emperor) might make him leave the hall. Badāunī said in an undertone to his neighbour, Asaf Khan, "If I were to carry out that order most of the 'Ulamās would have to leave," when the Pādshah turned to him and asked what he had said. Akbar laughed heartily when he was told, and repeated Badāunī's remark to the courtiers near the throne as a capital joke.

In the throne room and public audience-hall, where Hindu and Musalman courtiers met on terms of perfect equality, religious questions were often discussed with a freedom very unusual in a Muslim court. Bīrbal, the Brahman Poet Laureate and one of Akbar's favourites, would amuse the court with his witticisms at the expense of the 'Ulamās, who hated him with an intense bitterness, which often led to violent scenes in spite of the Pādshah's presence. One of the rājas once set the whole court laughing by a sarcastic remark made when the subject of Hindu veneration for the cow was mentioned. "Allah Himself," said he, "showed great respect for cows, for the cow is mentioned in the first chapter of the Qurān." [1]

The two Rajput Sultānas and other Hindu members of the imperial harem influenced Akbar's habits and induced him to shave his beard, and to give up eating beef, garlic, and onions—because, so it was whispered at court, "these things are inconvenient in kissing." He gave grave offence to many Musalman courtiers by insisting that they too should shave off their beards. But Akbar was as resolute in putting down Hindu practices which offended him as in braving the hostility of orthodox Musalmans by adopting those which he liked. He not only prohibited the burning of Hindu widows against their will and prevented the rājas from evading the prohibition; he also forbade the marriage of boys before the age of sixteen and of girls before fourteen, and interfered with the Hindu law forbidding the re-marriage of widows. In the first part of his reign, however, Akbar always seemed anxious to defer to orthodox Musalman opinion and to reconcile his public and

[1] *Surat-ul-baqarah* ("Sura of the Heifer"), Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, p. 215.

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private actions with Islamic tradition. Thus at one of the Thursday evening meetings he broached the subject of plural marriages and appointed a Qāzī to decide whether the Pādshah could lawfully take more than the usual number of free-born wives, as he himself had done. A lively discussion followed. The 'Ulamās were unanimous that four was the limit fixed by the Prophet, but there was a great difference of opinion as to the legal aspect of Akbar's case. One of Akbar's intimates, his foster-brother, Mirza 'Aziz Kokah, had an explanation of the inner meaning of the rule. It enabled the good Musalman to enjoy the highest connubial bliss by having a Persian wife to talk to, a Khurāsani wife to do his housework, a Hindu wife to be a mother for his children, and a Turki wife to whip as a warning to the other three. The Qāzī settled the matter to Akbar's satisfaction, for he was careful to appoint one who could be relied upon to give a favourable verdict. The mullās of the court generally succeeded in finding warrant for the Pādshah's unconventional proceedings in some rare Arabic manuscript opportunely brought to light. One such document—"an old worm-eaten MS. in queer characters"—was produced to prove that the coming Māhdi was to have many wives and would shave his beard. Akbar's maturer judgment on the subject of marriage is recorded by Abul Fazl in one of "His Majesty's wise sayings": "To seek more than one wife is to work one's own undoing. In case she were barren or bore no son, it might then be expedient. Had I been wise earlier, I should have taken no woman from my own kingdom into my seraglio, for my subjects are to me in the place of children." [1] This was doubtless a reflection of his intense grief for the misconduct of his three sons, Salīm, Murād, and Dāniyāl.

Among the interesting buildings still existing at Fatehpur-Sikri are several of the public offices in which Akbar and his ministers administered the affairs of the empire. The Daftar-Khāna, or Record Office, was where Abul Fazl sat when he acted as Finance Minister and directed the staff of officials

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Jarrett's translation, vol. iii, p. 398.

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busily engaged in drawing up innumerable reports and arranging the State records in the pigeon-holes recessed in the massive stone walls of the building. It was connected by a corridor with Akbar's private apartments, so that the minister could quickly run over for the Pādshah's orders and lay before him the daily reports of State business. Akbar from the time he became Emperor *de facto* as well as *de jure* exercised a close supervision over the smallest details of government. The *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, written by Abul Fazl himself, details the duties of his staff. They had first to act as court journalists—to record the orders and doings of the Emperor, what he ate and drank, when he slept and when he rose from bed, when he marched and when he halted; his acts as the spiritual guide of the nation; the vows made to him and his daily and monthly spiritual exercises; what he said and which books were read out to him. This official gazette and court journal also noted the arrival and departure of courtiers and gave a list of official appointments; a diary of current events; a schedule of births, marriages, and deaths, including fatalities in the imperial stables; the police news, or a record of capital punishments inflicted and reprieves granted by the Pādshah; a 'sports column' recording the imperial hunting parties, the animal fights and the bettings thereon, the games of chess and cards, polo, *chaupar*, and *nard*;[1] a meteorological report, or record of "extraordinary phenomena," and harvest reports. The financial news gave the increase and decrease of imperial taxation, a notice of contracts, sales, and money transfers, receipts of tribute, grants of rent-free land, and payments on account of the army.

This voluminous report, when it had been corrected by one of Akbar's private secretaries, was laid before the Emperor for his approval. A copy of it was then made, signed by three officials, and handed over to writers, who made a

[1] In the northern half of the great palace quadrangle is a *pachisi* board, cut in the pavement, similar to the one in the Samman Burj in the Agra palace. Here Akbar and the ladies of the court amused themselves by playing the game with slave-girls as living pieces.

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précis of its contents, which was kept for record after being signed and sealed by different ministers. Among other duties of the record-keepers was the preparation of papers for Akbar's signature, the receipt of departmental reports and the filing of the Pādshah's minutes thereon, and the reporting of the proceedings of the philosophical meetings. Akbar's object, says his faithful biographer, was "that every duty be properly performed; that there be no undue increase or decrease in any department; that dishonest people be removed, and trustworthy people be held in esteem; and that active servants may work without fear, and negligent and forgetful men be held in check." [1]

On the east side of the Fatehpur palace and of easy access from the throne room, or Diwān-i-Khās, was Akbar's Diwān-i-ām, or Hall of Public Audience, where he frequently appeared to transact public business, to receive the reports of officers, to inspect the works of the court painters and craftsmen, to hold a durbar, or to administer justice. The Pādshah generally showed himself to his people twice daily—first after performing his morning devotions and afterwards in the Diwān-i-ām. Though he was particular in matters of court ceremonial and etiquette, in his judicial capacity he was studiously simple both in dress and demeanour, taking much pains to make himself accessible to the meanest of his subjects by seating himself, or standing, below the *gaddi* or judgment seat, and giving personal attention to every case.

Akbar's intellectual interests were by no means wholly confined to literature, philosophy, and religion. He gave close attention to the work of the court builders and the painters who decorated the palaces of Agra and Fatehpur, illustrated profusely the books of the imperial library, and recorded the history of the reign; also to the weavers of fine carpets, brocades, and other textiles, the goldsmiths, jewellers, and other skilled craftsmen employed in the imperial workshops, which numbered nearly a hundred. Akbar took a special interest in the ordnance factory, where many pieces of artillery and special kinds of

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, vol. i, p. 259.

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matchlocks were made after the Pādshah's own instructions. He also devoted himself to improvements in horse-, cattle-, and elephant-breeding. Akbar was a strict economist, both in official and private affairs, regulating the expenses of his court and household with as much exactitude as those of his army. He fixed the prices of food and building material and the wages of labourers, and collected statistics for the purpose of checking extravagance and corruption in every department of the State. At the beginning of his reign, finding that the whole revenue administration was hopelessly corrupt, he appointed his chief eunuch, Itimād Khan, to reorganize it. A systematic inquiry was set on foot to ascertain the production of different kinds of land and to assess the taxes thereon. A proper system of accounts was introduced and regulations were made to prevent the ryots from being plundered. This work was afterwards continued by the Rāja Todar Mall, who was appointed Vakil of the empire in 1583.

Fatehpur-Sikri has memorials of Faizi, Abul Fazl, and Rāja Bīrbal, but none of Todar Mall, unless the Mint and Treasury buildings may be connected with his name. Many of the ministers and grandees of the empire were only temporary residents at Fatehpur, occupying garden-houses on the shores of the great lake, now dried up, where the court tournaments took place and Akbar amused himself with polo, deer-hunting, and hawking. His prowess as a big-game hunter is still remembered in Indian folk-lore, and Abul Fazl gives many instances, but he generally combined State business with recreation, using his hunting parties as occasions for making himself acquainted with the conditions of the people or for inspecting the army. In his youth Akbar was passionately fond of all kinds of sport, but later on he revolted against the indiscriminate slaughter of animals and reckoned an inordinate passion for the chase among the four besetting sins which royalty should avoid—the other three being gambling, wine, and women.

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CHAPTER XVII

AKBAR AS RULER OF ĀRYĀVARTA

(continued)

THE seventeen years during which Akbar resided mostly at Fatehpur were the most important of his reign. They were those in which most of his great administrative reforms were begun, and his ideas of a State religion took shape in the proclamation of the *Dīn-Ilāhī*, or Divine Faith, from the pulpit of the Jāmi' Masjid. In the same time he also brought to a successful conclusion two of his great campaigns, ending in the annexation of Gujerat and the final conquest of the Afghans in Bengal; the former being celebrated by the building of the mighty portal of the Jāmi' Masjid known as the Buland Darwāza, one of the most splendid achievements of his Rajput master-builders.

The Moguls in Humāyūn's reign had once before overrun Gujerat, and its conquest was an easy matter for Akbar's well-organized army, for, after having existed for only a century and a half as an independent Muhammadan state, it had reached the condition so often recurring in the political system of Islam—the supreme power had fallen into the hands of low-born conspirators of criminal tendencies, in whose hands the sword of Islam was mainly an instrument of massacre and murder. After the death of Bahādur Shah in the harbour of Dīu in 1536, his nephew, Mahmūd III, reigned about eighteen years, and then was assassinated by one of his slaves named Burhān, who disposed of other potential candidates for the throne by a series of secret murders, but shared the fate of his victims on his first appearance in public afterwards. The government then fell into the hands of Itimād Khan, a trusted servant of the former Sultan who had avenged

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his master's murder by killing Burhān. Itimād put upon the throne a puppet prince, Ahmad II, but five years later found the new Sultan an inconvenience and, having got rid of him by following Burhān's example, set up another under the title of Muzaffar Shah III. This arrangement was not acceptable to Itimād's rivals at court—a typical gang of Musalman adventurers, chiefly Turkish and Abyssinian—so they divided the Sultanate among themselves and revolted against Itimād's authority. Sultan Mirza, one of the imperial Mogul family, and other relatives of Akbar seized the opportunity of fishing in these muddy waters, and eventually Itimād fled to Akbar's court and invited the Pādshah's intervention in the affairs of Gujerat.

Akbar accordingly in 1572 marched to take possession of the Sultanate. As soon as the imperial forces reached Patān, Muzaffar Shah, the nominal Sultan, left Ahmadābād and presented himself at the Pādshah's camp for the purpose of surrendering himself and his kingdom. Akbar's relatives, the rebellious Mogul Mirzas, gave more trouble. Leaving a garrison at Ahmadābād, Akbar pushed on to lay siege to Surat, occupied by a part of the rebel forces, but the Mirza in command, Ibrāhīm Husain, evaded him and set out to join the main rebel body in the north of Gujerat. Akbar, at the head of a few chosen retainers, dashed off in pursuit, and came up with the enemy just after they had crossed the river Mhendri, near the town of Sārsa. At this moment Akbar was joined by several of his most devoted Rajput friends, including Rāja Bhagwān Dās, Rāja Mān Singh, the Rāja of Rantambhōr, and a few more horsemen. Though the odds were still about seven to one against him he resolved to attack at once. Crossing the river, the Rajputs charged with Rāja Mān Singh at their head, but they were so galled by the enemy's archers that they had to fall back into a clump of prickly pear for shelter, the sharp spines of the cactus serving as a barbed-wire defence. The enemy's horse now charged in their turn, and Akbar was attacked in a narrow lane formed by cactus hedges where only three horsemen could ride abreast, and would have been overpowered had not Rāja Bhagwān Dās and his brother come

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to the rescue. The latter, says Ferishta, "displayed on this day the heroism of Rustum and Isfandyar, and, penetrating beyond the lane, he repeatedly charged through a body of one hundred men, and eventually lost his life." [1] Akbar himself performed prodigies of valour, fighting side by side with his gallant Rajputs, and seeing his cousin, the Mirza, in the enemy's ranks, charged straight at him. Ibrāhīm did not wait to cross swords with the Pādshah, but continued his retreat, and succeeded in joining the other Mirzas near Patān.

Akbar went back to direct the siege of Surat, while the Mirzas attempted a counter-stroke by laying siege to Patān and by sending Ibrāhīm Husain to invade the Panjab. The latter project was frustrated by Rāja Rāi Singh of Bikanīr, who had been appointed by Akbar as his governor in Jodhpur, while the Mogul garrison of Ahmadābād marched to the relief of Patān and attacked the main rebel army, which was driven in disorder into the Dekhan. Ibrāhīm Husain, after being defeated by the Rāja of Bikanīr, retired to his family estate in Bihār, but shortly afterwards set off to join his brother in raiding the Panjab. The vigilance of Akbar's officers, however, again frustrated his schemes. The brothers were taken prisoners. Ibrāhīm died of his wounds, and his head was struck off and placed, by Akbar's orders, over one of the gates of Agra. His brother was confined in the fortress of Gwalior until his death. In 1573 Akbar, having completed the conquest of Gujerat by the capture of Surat, returned to his capital. The success of the campaign had been chiefly due to the loyalty and courage of the Pādshah's Rajput allies, who doubtless found much satisfaction in paying off old scores with their Gujerati neighbours.

A month afterwards one of the Mirzas, Muhammad Husain, was on the war-path again, and with the help of several Gujerati chieftains was besieging Ahmadābād. The imperial troops were in difficulties, and, owing to the rainy season having set in, it was impossible to send a large army to assist them. Akbar followed his usual policy of striking a lightning blow

[1] Briggs' translation, vol. ii, p. 237.

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before the enemy had time to gather strength. Without losing a day he sent forward two thousand picked horsemen by forced marches to Patān, and himself followed immediately with his retinue mounted on camels and accompanied by led horses. At Patān his force mustered three thousand cavalry. He placed Mirza Abdurrāhīm, the son of his old guardian Bairām Khan, in command of the advance guard, and then pushed on towards Ahmadābād with such speed that the imperial war-drums were announcing the Pādshah's approach to the astonished besiegers only nine days after he had left Agra—a distance of 450 miles. The Mirza could hardly believe his ears, for one of his spies had seen the Pādshah in Agra fourteen days before, but as he found that Akbar had no elephants he resolved to give battle, and leaving 5000 horse to prevent the garrison joining the relieving force, he marched with 7000 horse to the attack. Akbar, finding that the besieged garrison could give him no aid, had crossed the river and drawn up his troops on the plain. There were Moguls, Afghans, and Rajputs on both sides, but the *morale* of the imperial army was far superior. The rebels had no common interest to serve except the prospect of plunder; the Pādshah's men were inspired by devotion to their chief, and his personality counted for much. After some desperate fighting the battle was decided by Akbar charging the enemy's flank with a hundred men of his body-guard. The Mirza fled, but was taken prisoner and handed over to the charge of the Rāja of Bikanīr. While Akbar, after the victory, was waiting for the arrival of the Governor of Gujerat he was suddenly attacked by a detachment of Gujeratis under the command of a local chieftain, but as soon as the imperial war-drum indicating the Pādshah's presence was sounded they broke and fled in disorder. Their commander fell in the pursuit, and in the turmoil caused by the fighting the Mirza Muhammad Husain was executed by the Rāja of Bikanīr's orders, on his own responsibility, to prevent his escape. Akbar, after this brilliantly successful campaign of about six weeks, returned to Fatehpur-Sikri and received in audience the general in command of the

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imperial forces in the Panjab, a son of Bairām Khan's sister, who had suppressed the rebel Mirzas' attempt in that province and brought back some of his prisoners tied up in raw cow-hides with their eyelids sewn together. Akbar immediately released them from this horrible torture, and even pardoned some of them. At the same time he rewarded the general's military services by conferring on him the title of Khan Jahān, and afterwards sent him back to the Panjab to assist one of the members of the imperial house in recovering possession of Badakshān.

Akbar's next great military undertaking was the conquest of Bengal, which had continued under Afghan rule from the beginning of his reign, though, as in the case of Gujerat, the government was hopelessly weak and corrupt and the whole country was distracted by the various contending factions. Dāūd Khan, the nominal ruler, had acknowledged Akbar's suzerainty, but had neglected to pay the customary tribute, and had come into conflict with the imperial forces in Bihār. So in 1574 Akbar organized an expeditionary force, which, as was usual in campaigns in the lower Ganges valley, was assisted by an armed flotilla. He then proceeded, partly by land and partly by river, into the eastern part of Bihār, which was under Dāūd's government. After taking Hajipur and Patna he appointed Mun'im Khan, one of his former guardians, Governor of Bihār and commander-in-chief of the expeditionary force and returned himself to Fatehpur.

Mun'im Khan was one of Humāyūn's Turkish adherents who had entered Akbar's service. He was deeply implicated in the plot for the assassination of Atgah Khan, but had been pardoned by Akbar, who was always lenient in dealing with the riotous proceedings of his old associates if they had proved themselves loyal and capable soldiers. After the revolt and death of Khan Zamān he had succeeded to the latter's jāgir in Jaunpur, and had acted as the Pādshah's military representative in Bihār as well as his diplomatic agent in the negotiations with the Afghans in Bengal. The second in command of the expedition was Rāja Todar Mall, who had just before

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been employed in settling revenue affairs in Gujerat and had also done military service in Bihār previously. On the approach of the Mogul army Dāūd retreated to the Hughli, and Mun'im Khan pushed on to the Afghan capital, Gaur, and occupied Tāndah, on the opposite side of the river. There he remained for some time to order the affairs of the conquered territory, but sent a detachment under the command of another of Humāyūn's old retainers, Muhammad Quli Khan Barlas, and Rāja Todar Mall, to pursue the Afghans.

For some time the Afghans had the advantage, owing to the difficulties of transport in the delta of the Ganges and their superior knowledge of the country. The Mogul army suffered seriously from sickness and was twice defeated in minor engagements. At Midnapur Muhammad Quli Khan died, and Rāja Todar Mall was compelled to wait for the arrival of Mun'im Khan with reinforcements. The decisive battle took place at Takaroī, or Mughalmārī, on the borders of Orissa. The Afghans, led by a distinguished chieftain, Gūjar Khan, charged furiously with their elephants and threw the Mogul vanguard into confusion. Khan-i-'Ālam, the general in command, was killed, and Mun'im Khan, who was an old man of eighty, was driven off the field after a hand-to-hand fight with the Afghan general. The day was saved by the steadiness of the Rajputs on the right wing under Todar Mall's command. "What does it matter," he cried when the news of the disaster reached him, "if Khan-i-'Ālam is dead? Why should we fear because the Khan Khanān has run away? The empire is ours!" With these words he animated his men and kept up the fight until Gūjar Khan fell pierced by an arrow and the Afghans on both flanks were pressed back upon their centre. At the critical point Mun'im Khan succeeded in rallying his broken troops and returned to the attack. Dāūd Khan fled and the rout of the Afghans was complete. The Mogul forces under Rāja Todar Mall then entered Orissa. Dāūd Khan shortly afterwards opened negotiations with the Mogul commander-in-chief, and a treaty was drawn up by which Bengal was ceded

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to the Mogul Empire, while Dāūd remained in possession of Orissa.

The Khan Khanān, Mun'im Khan, whom Akbar appointed Viceroy in Bengal, returned to his headquarters at Tāndah, but foolishly resolved to re-occupy Gaur, the old capital on the other side of the Ganges, which had been deserted on account of its unhealthiness. A violent epidemic of plague caused the death of a great many of the Mogul officers and played havoc with the troops, but the Viceroy, in spite of protests, refused to move. At last he himself was taken ill and died. Dāūd thought this was an opportunity for recovering his lost kingdom, and being joined by many Afghan chieftains, invaded Bengal with an army of fifty thousand horse. He had made considerable headway before Akbar recalled Khan Jahān Husain Quli from the Panjab and sent him with reinforcements to take supreme command of the Mogul army in Bengal. Rāja Todar Mall remained as second in command. The new campaign ended with the final defeat and death of Dāūd and the extinction of Afghan rule in Bengal.

Khan Jahān in 1577 sent Todar Mall, who had again distinguished himself in the field, to the imperial court with some of the rich spoils of war, and in the following year Akbar sent the Rāja again to Gujerat to attend to revenue affairs in that province.

The Afghan landowners in Bengal continued to give much trouble after the death of Dāūd, for they were by no means content with finding themselves despoiled of their estates by the retainers of the Mogul Viceroy. Nor were the Mogul chieftains themselves disposed to render the imperial treasury its dues, and the pressure which Akbar brought to bear upon them subsequently led to a serious mutiny among the Mogul troops in Bengal. The Viceroy, Khan Jahān, set the example of amassing a huge fortune by indiscriminate plunder, and was, says Abul Fazl, on the verge of rebellion when he died a year after his appointment to the governorship of the province.

Todar Mall was Akbar's right-hand man in revenue matters,

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and he served his master well. He was a man of strict integrity, and a most capable departmental chief. By his exertions the systematic plundering both of the treasury and of the ryots by the revenue officials was effectually checked. The ryots knew the limit of the Government's demands and were relieved from the gang of unscrupulous thieves who acted as agents for the Pādshah ; the imperial treasury was filled to overflowing and Akbar's political plans were never hampered for lack of financial means. But the great fame which Todar Mall acquired on account of his revenue system must be considered more as a testimony of the people's gratitude for relief from the intolerable burden which had weighed upon them almost continually from the first days of Muhammadan rule than as an acknowledgment of its intrinsic merits as financial legislation. Todar Mall was a hard man, and the fact that his scheme was only a development of Shēr Shah's revenue system is sufficient to indicate how little the spirit of Indo-Aryan political economy entered into his financial reforms. But in this as in so many other matters Akbar's administration gathered lustre from the misdeeds of his predecessors, and Abul Fazl, like other historians of the Mogul period, has conveniently avoided comparison with the great days of Indo-Aryan rule.

Akbar, no doubt, was sincerely anxious to deal fairly with the cultivators, whose industry provided the principal part of the revenue. He did away with a number of vexatious supplementary taxes and fees by which even Hindu rulers had often raised the total amount of the land-tax above the limit fixed by Indo-Aryan constitutional law. But Todar Mall's demand of one-third of the average produce was double the amount which Indo-Aryan political economists held to be justifiable in normal times, and even exceeded that which they allowed as an emergency measure when the safety of the State was seriously threatened. On the other hand, the condition of the country could not be considered normal. Akbar had a gigantic task to perform, and the people were happy to pay the price for a strong central government which

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could give them peace and prosperity and an honest administration.

Various regulations made by Akbar's Government were designed to obviate the hardships of a cut-and-dried revenue system. The taxes were fixed in money value, but every ryot was allowed to pay in kind if he thought the money rate was not fair, and if the assessment of his land seemed to him too high he had the right to insist upon the measurement and division of his crops. A rebate on the full demand was allowed in various cases, *e.g.* when the land had suffered from floods or had been out of cultivation for three years. The tax was remitted so long as the land lay fallow. The settlement was first made annually, but afterwards for a term of ten years, on the basis of the average payments for the preceding term. As Revenue Minister Todar Mall had the advantage of his experience as a Hindu landowner and thorough knowledge of the ancient village traditions, so that his whole scheme as regards the measurement of land, classification of soils, and assessment could be expeditiously carried out with the goodwill of the villagers. Various improvements were made in the instruments of mensuration, and Todar Mall earned the lasting gratitude of the ryots for the relief of their former burdens which he effected.

The most important innovation introduced by Todar Mall, says Professor Blochmann, was the change in the language and character used in the revenue accounts. "Formerly they had been kept in Hindī[1] by Hindu *muharrirs*. Todar Mall ordered that all Government accounts should henceforth be written in Persian. He thus forced his co-religionists to learn the court language of their rulers—a circumstance which may well be compared to the introduction of the English language in the courts of India. The study of Persian therefore became necessary for its pecuniary advantages. Todar Mall's order and Akbar's generous policy of allowing Hindus to compete for the highest honours . . . explain two facts: first, that before the end of the eighteenth century the Hindus had almost

[1] "In the vernaculars" would have been a more correct statement.

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become the Persian teachers of the Muhammadans; secondly, that a new dialect could arise in Upper India, the *Urdu*, which, without the Hindus as receiving medium, never could have been called into existence. Whether we attach more influence to Todar Mall's order or to Akbar's policy, which, once initiated, his successors, willing or not, had to follow, one fact should be borne in mind—that before the times of Akbar the Hindus, as a rule, did not study Persian, and stood therefore politically below their Muhammadan rulers." [1]

Todar Mall's innovation, however, seems to have been designed more in the interests of the landlords than of the cultivators; for the latter would certainly not have benefited by the use of a foreign language in the revenue accounts. It may be questioned whether the use of Persian as a court language was ever a serious obstacle to the political advancement of Hindus. The Persian language would be far easier for the educated Hindu than English; and many Muhammadan rulers before Akbar had employed Hindu ministers who were doubtless as proficient in Persian as any Indian Musalman. The Hindus had been teachers of the Muhammadans even before the latter entered India, and it was through the absorption of Indo-Aryan culture that Islam in India took the position it holds to-day among world-religions. Akbar was one of the great Musalman rulers who in promoting the cause of Islam helped also to purge Hinduism of many abuses and to break down sectarian intolerance on both sides.

It was Todar Mall's strict integrity in financial matters as well as his ability as a general which made Akbar select him as his Vazir, and afterwards, in 1579, send him to suppress the disorders in Bengal which arose from the attempt to carry out his reforms in revenue administration. The landowners, both Afghan and Mogul, resented any interference with their prescriptive right of plundering the ryots and made common cause in resisting the introduction of a settled system of revenue-collection which both secured the due payment of

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, vol. i, p. 352.

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imperial taxes and protected the cultivators from exactions. In 1583, when Todar Mall became Vakil, or Prime Minister, of the empire, Akbar sent his foster-brother, Mirza 'Aziz Kokah, the son of Atgah Khan, whose tragic death has already been recorded, to continue the difficult task of restoring order in Bengal. He succeeded partly by concessions to the landlords and partly by military measures in pacifying both the Afghan and Mogul rebels, but it was not until 1592, or eighteen years after the first expedition to Bengal, that Rāja Mān Singh brought the refractory zamindars to order and restored peace to the distracted province.

In the meantime affairs in Rājputāna and on the north-west frontier had engaged Akbar's attention. In 1576 the army of Ajmīr fought a great battle with the Rāna of Mewār, Partab Singh (or Rāna Kīkā), at Gogūnda. Partab Singh was the successor of Udai Singh. In the secure retreat of the fastnesses of the Aravali hills to which the Rajputs of Mewār had retired after the fall of Chitor he had remained indifferent to the glamour of the Pādshah's successes in the field, which brought even his own brothers to the imperial court, and treated with contempt Akbar's demand for the surrender of one of his State elephants as a token of submission. Akbar, whose success both as a war-lord and as an administrator was largely due to his unerring judgment in the selection of his officers, appointed Rāja Mān Singh to the chief command of the expedition sent to bring the proud Rāna to reason, trusting to his proved capacity as a general and his exceptional knowledge of the country and of Rajput tactics. Mān Singh, according to the evidence of the Musalman historian Badāunī, who took part in the battle, fully justified the Emperor's confidence, for when the Rāna descended from the mountains and broke the vanguard of the imperial army in a furious charge it was only his fine generalship and the conspicuous courage of his Rajput bodyguard which turned defeat into victory and prevented a great disaster to the Mogul army. "That day," says Badāunī, "through the generalship of Mān Singh the

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meaning of this line of Mullā Shīrī became known : " A Hindu wields the sword of Islam." [1]

Akbar, nevertheless, was not satisfied with the somewhat meagre result of the campaign—which was that the Rāna, wounded in a hand-to-hand conflict with Mān Singh, retreated to his mountain fortress, leaving his State elephant and other spoils in the possession of the Moguls—though Mān Singh doubtless showed a wise discretion in not allowing his forces to be entangled in the recesses of the Aravali range. The imperial prestige, however, suffered somewhat by the privations endured by the troops after the victory from the scarcity of fodder and provisions in the plains of Mewār, and from Mān Singh's refusal to allow the villages to be plundered according to the time-honoured Musalman tradition. A good deal of sickness resulted from over-indulgence in mango-fruit, which grew, says Badāunī, in such abundance as to defy description. Akbar, after sending an emissary to investigate, recalled Mān Singh, but the Rajputs of Mewār continued to defy all his efforts to subdue them. The Emperor, however, had little reason to be dissatisfied with the progress of his military plans, for the same year the campaign in Bengal was brought to a triumphant conclusion by the defeat and death of Dāūd, a success mainly due, as we have seen, to the ability of another Rajput general, Rāja Todar Mall.

[1] Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, p. 239.

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CHAPTER XVIII

AKBAR AS SPIRITUAL LEADER OF ISLAM

THE three years from 1576 to 1579 were comparatively tranquil, and Akbar was free to plunge himself deeply into the religious and metaphysical problems which had such an intense attraction for him. Abul Fazl was admitted into the inner circle of the court at Fatehpur, and the Thursday evening debates on religion and philosophy had begun. Up to this time Akbar, though he had maintained a tolerant attitude towards Hindu beliefs, which was in itself offensive to the orthodox Musalman, had never wavered in the strict performance of his religious duties according to the Muslim faith. He had been most assiduous in visiting the shrines of Musalman saints, and had treated with the utmost reverence the living shaikhs who had won a reputation for sanctity. The Great Mosque and college of Fatehpur had been founded in honour of Shaikh Salīm Chishtī; Akbar's eldest son, Sultan Salīm, had been born in his house and named after him. The Sultan Dāniyāl, a younger son of the imperial house, had likewise been named after another shaikh of great renown at Ajmīr to whom the Pādshah frequently paid his respects. Akbar had encouraged his Musalman subjects to visit the holy shrines of Islam at Mekka, and had assisted all who wished to do so from the imperial treasury. He continued to do this even after the proclamation which made him the supreme authority in spiritual matters for all his subjects. In fact, though he subsequently took a different attitude towards this and many other of the outward forms and ceremonies of Islam, which he rejected as superfluous or misleading in the same spirit as

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Protestantism rejected the ritual of the Church of Rome, not even his worst enemy, Badāunī, accuses him of disputing the authority of the Qurān, though he says that others spoke contemptuously of it.

Akbar, indeed, was a true son of the Renaissance who claimed the right of interpreting the Musalman scriptures in the light of the scientific knowledge of his time. He would accept no dogmatic teaching which could not justify itself philosophically, or was in conflict with the known laws of nature. "Discourses in philosophy have such a charm for me," he said, "that they distract me from all else, and I forcibly restrain myself from listening to them lest the necessary duties of the hour should be neglected." [1] But he was far from being a rationalist who denied the truth of divine revelation. It is true that he insisted on the necessity of considering all dogmas in the light of human intelligence. "The superiority of man," he said, "rests on the jewel of reason. It is meet that he should labour in its burnishing, and turn not from its instruction. A man is the disciple of his own reason. If it has naturally a good lustre, it becomes itself his direction, and if it gains it under the direction of a higher mind it is still his guide." [2] But at the same time, he said, the intellect will not, with the full assent of 'reason,' confessedly oppose "the divine law." "When man habituated himself to preserve the sacred relationship between the Supreme Being and himself, the bond of Divine love upon which the very existence of humanity depended kept the rational soul in close contact with God—and he who is spiritually illumined knows that none can effectually oppose His commands." These are not the sentiments of a rationalist, but rather those of a mystic who, penetrating beneath the surface of dogmatic teaching, saw that Islam in its inspirational depths came from the unfathomed source of Divine wisdom from which the rishis of India had drunk ages before the Hegira; and now that the millennium of Islam was approaching he felt that the time had come

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Jarrett's translation, vol. iii, p. 386.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

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when all earnest Muslims should seek a means of reconciliation with their Hindu brethren.

Some of Akbar's experiments for testing the foundation of religious belief would seem crude to the modern scientist—as when he ordered that twenty infants, whom their mothers had agreed to part with for a consideration, should be put into a secluded house far from human habitation in charge of nurses with strict instructions that they should never hear a word spoken—the object being to ascertain whether they showed any natural tendency towards one form of religion or another. The painful result was that many of the infants died from neglect, and others after three or four years remained dumb.[1] But Akbar was neither ignorant, as Badāunī declared, nor shallow in his religious beliefs. The Shaikh Mubārak and his two sons, who were his chief Musalman advisers, were renowned for their thorough scholarship; Akbar himself was indefatigable in his studies. He sought counsel from the most learned men of his age and availed himself of every source of information on religious matters, as Badāunī himself shows: "Crowds of learned men from all nations, and sages of various religions and sects, came to the court and were honoured with private conversations. After inquiries and investigations, which were their only business and occupation day and night, they would talk about profound points of science, the subtleties of revelation, the curiosities of history, and the wonders of nature."[2]

But though Akbar was thus deeply imbued with the spirit of Indo-Aryan culture, it seems to be an entire misconception of his religious attitude to believe that he ceased to profess Islam, though one of his 'happy sayings,' as translated by Colonel Jarrett,[3] would make it appear that he ultimately did

[1] Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, p. 296.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[3] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, vol. iii, p. 384. The question is discussed by Mr Vincent Smith and others in the *Asiatic Review*, July and August 1915. The correct translation, given by Mr Yusuf Ali, is as follows: "Formerly I used to force men into my way of thinking, and such a [proselyte] I looked upon as a Musalman. As knowledge grew I was filled with shame. [For any one] not

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so. He was a reformer, finding food in all religions, who endeavoured to place Islam on a broader foundation and make it a universal religion, thus fulfilling the prophecy attributed to Muhammad, which in Akbar's time caused so much excitement among Muslims, that at the millennium of the Hegira a new Prophet, the Imām Māhdi, would "fill the world with justice" and lead all men to Islam. Naturally he satisfied none of his courtiers except a few devoted adherents, and aroused the bitter hostility of all narrow sectarians who were so convinced of the absolute superiority of their own particular dogmas that they were opposed to all inquiry into the deeper truths of religion. To the Jesuit priests of Goa, though he treated them with the greatest consideration and listened most attentively to their arguments, his mind remained an enigma—"so close and self-contained, with twists of words and deeds, so divergent one from the other, and at most times so contradictory, that even by much seeking one could not find the clue to his thoughts." His leanings towards Christianity disgusted the orthodox Musalman, like Badāunī. The orthodox Hindu, like the Rāja Bhagwān Dās, though perfectly willing to do homage to him as Vishnu's Vicegerent on earth, refused to recognize him as a guru or exponent of Aryan religion.

Rāja Mān Singh, when pressed by the Emperor to become a member of the new Sangha which was to embrace all sects

being a Musalman to draw others into that [path] was not fitting. What they are forced to accept, how can it be called religion?" Mr Vincent Smith makes this, as it seems to be at first sight, an open acknowledgment of Akbar's secession from Islam. But though the argument is rather ambiguous in form, Akbar is clearly referring throughout to his earlier years, when Mr Vincent Smith himself allows that he was a sincere and zealous Musalman. It cannot therefore possibly be construed as Colonel Jarrett and Mr Vincent Smith would have it. The argument seems rather to be that Akbar as he advanced in years and knowledge had understood the true spirit of Islam better than to force others to profess it against their conscience. Mr Vincent Smith supports his contention by Father Monserrate's report of a conversation he had with the Pādshah in 1582; but such evidence is worth little in the absence of Akbar's acknowledgment that the conversation was correctly reported. The Jesuit Fathers were eager to claim Akbar as a convert, and would be prone to exaggerate any expression of his opinions indicating a dissent from Musalman orthodoxy.

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and creeds, replied: "If your Majesty means by the term of membership willingness to sacrifice one's life, I have given pretty clear proofs and your Majesty might dispense with examining me; but if the term has another meaning and refers to religion, surely I am a Hindu. And if I am to become a Muhammadan your Majesty ought to say so—but besides Hinduism and Islam I know of no other religion."

To the Sunnis, who took the traditional law of Islam as a divine revelation and clung to the literal interpretation of it given by the 'Ulamās, the spirit of inquiry which animated Akbar was in itself, as Badāunī said, "opposed to every Muslim principle." The Pādshah was to them a backslider and a heretic who had renounced the creed of his fathers, a pure rationalist who impiously doubted the truth of divine revelation. The chief spokesman of the Sunni faction, the Mukdūm-ul-Mulk—"learned in law and austere in practice," who "zealously persecuted heretics" and was the inveterate enemy of Shaikh Mubārak and his sons—became Akbar's pet aversion and the butt of Bīrbal's jests in the philosophical debates. He nevertheless joined with the Shaikh, Faizi, Abul Fazl, and others in signing the famous document which declared that the Pādshah was "a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing King," and made him, on the authority of the Qurān, the final arbiter in questions affecting Islamic doctrine. A few months afterwards Akbar sent him on a pilgrimage to Mekka to get rid of him, and on his return he was banished from the court; but the story that Akbar had him assassinated was doubtless one of the many malignant inventions fabricated by the Pādshah's enemies.

The events of these three most interesting years in Akbar's reign are recorded, from the Sunni point of view, in Badāunī's history. When the Debating Hall, the Ibādat-Khāna, which Akbar ordered to be built at Fatehpur was finished in 1575, "the questions of Sufism, scientific discussions, inquiries into philosophy and law, were the order of the day." Akbar spent much of his time in company with the disciples of the saint of Ajmīr, to whose tomb he made annual pilgrimages, discussing

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the Qurān and the sayings of the Prophet. At the very commencement of the debates disputes arose on questions of precedence, and Akbar had to intervene and order that the amīrs should sit on the east side, the Sayyids on the west, the 'Ulamās on the south, and the shaikhs on the north. The learned doctors of Islam, unaccustomed to defend their tenets in Hindu fashion with the weapons of logic instead of with the sword, were far from pleased with this revival of a time-honoured institution of Āryāvarta, and the debates often degenerated into unseemly wrangles. "One night the vein of the neck of the 'Ulamā of the age swelled up," says Badāunī, "and a horrid noise and confusion ensued." The Emperor interposed and threatened to send away any 'Ulamā who talked nonsense or misbehaved himself. It was this incident which provoked Badāunī's whispered comment, "If I were to carry out that order most of the 'Ulamās would have to leave"—a thrust at his fellow-Sunnis which diverted the Emperor greatly.

Akbar would call upon the Mukdūm-ul-Mulk, as the chief representative of the orthodox party, and put up Abul Fazl, then a new arrival at court, to argue with him. One can imagine that the young scholar was delighted with the opportunity of baiting his father's persecutor in open court, while the robust, active-minded Emperor watched the combatants with his penetrating eyes, listening attentively and enjoying the intellectual treat with as much zest as he did his favourite sport, an elephant fight. Akbar did not disguise his sympathy for the younger of the two disputants, for, says Badāunī, "His Majesty used to interrupt the Moulānā at every statement, and at a hint from him his companions also would interfere with interjections and observations, and would tell queer stories about the Moulānā, and exemplified in his person the verse of the Qurān, 'And some of you shall have life prolonged to a miserable old age.'" The Mukdūm-ul-Mulk was not a popular person among Akbar's intimates. He had been a great power at court in the reign of Islam Shah, when he had been instrumental in bringing about the death of the Shaikh

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'Alāī. In the early years of Akbar's reign he had set the Pādshah's mind against Shaikh Mubārak and nearly succeeded in procuring his execution as a heretic. But now his star was on the wane, for Akbar had begun to understand the littleness of his mind and the meanness of his character, and took a mischievous pleasure in exposing him to ridicule. "Stories were told one after another about his meanness and shabbiness, and baseness and worldliness, and oppression, all which vices were exhibited towards holy and deserving men, especially those of the Panjab, and which one by one came to light, verifying the saying, 'There is a day when secrets shall be disclosed.'" Akbar's method of dealing with the hoary old hypocrite was very characteristic. Though he was willing to condone many faults in the rough veteran soldiers who were the associates of his boyhood, he hated meanness and deceit. The Pādshah himself was no saint, and he could be terrible when his Tartar blood was roused; but none of his narrow-minded critics doubted the sincerity of his nature and his intense desire to arrive at the truth. He was a keen observer and an excellent judge of character: these debates gave him an admirable opportunity of noting the qualifications and worth of the men gathered round his throne.

At the beginning the discussions turned chiefly on points of Muhammadan law and the doctrines of the many different sects of Islam. Akbar ordered some of the 'Ulamās to write a commentary on the Qurān, but this, says Badāunī, "led to great rows among them." Then some Portuguese priests appeared at court. He questioned them closely upon the philosophical basis of Christian doctrine, and seemed to be much impressed, for he requested the authorities at Goa to send him experts to give further instruction. The hopes of the Portuguese ran high at the prospect of winning so desirable a convert, and in 1580 they sent a mission, headed by Father Rodolfo Aquaviva, which was received most graciously by the Pādshah and accorded permission to build a chapel at Agra. One of the priests was employed to assist in the translation of Greek literature into Persian. Faizi was ordered to

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prepare a Persian translation of the Gospels ; the court painters copied many of the sacred pictures, in which Akbar showed much interest. Akbar, personally, disappointed the expectations of the good Fathers. The Pādshah would join reverently in divine service at the Christian church ; but his attitude was that of an impartial scientific inquirer. He would try the effect of Christianity upon the unbiased mind of the young, and ordered his son, Prince Murād, a child of eight years, to be instructed in the Christian doctrine. He must have noticed the inconsistency between the Christian principles taught by the priests and the conduct of the Portuguese Christians at Goa, and the experiment with his own son was by no means convincing. Prince Murād, like both of his brothers, grew up a confirmed drunkard, and eventually died of delirium tremens at the age of twenty-eight. The second mission sent from Goa in 1590 convinced the Jesuits that Akbar's mind was inscrutable, though he still remained most friendly disposed towards them and liked to have some of them always near him.

In the meanwhile Akbar was pursuing his inquiries with unabated zeal, hearing the arguments of Sufi and Shiah divines, listening to disputes between Brahmans, Buddhists, Musalmans, Parsis, Jews, and Christians, and adding to his library Persian translations of important works on philosophy, science, history, and religion. Among Sanskrit works which were thus translated were the *Atharva Veda*, the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*, the *Harivamsa*, Kalhana's *History of Kashmīr*, the *Lilawati*, or treatise on arithmetic, by Bhaskarachārya, and other works on mathematics and astronomy. Akbar personally supervised the translation of the Mahābhārata, and the court painters were kept busy in making illustrations for the Hindu epics, as well as for the masterpieces of Persian and Arabic literature. The imperial librarians brought the Emperor daily the books which they had translated and read them to him from beginning to end. " At whatever page the readers daily stop His Majesty makes with his own pen a sign, according to the number of the pages, and rewards the readers with presents of cash, either in gold or silver, according to the number of

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leaves read out by them. . . . He does not get tired of hearing a book over again, but listens to the reading of it with more interest." [1] In this way Akbar, who had a prodigious memory, trained himself to take the part of arbitrator in the court debates held in the Diwān-i-ām or in the Ibādat-Khāna, which were of absorbing interest for him. He also began to plunge into the intricacies of Hindu philosophy and ritual and into the mysteries of occult science. "A Brahman, named Debi, who was one of the interpreters of the Mahābhārata, was pulled up the wall of the castle [at Agra] sitting on a *chārpāi* till he arrived near a balcony which the Emperor had made his bedchamber. Whilst thus suspended he instructed His Majesty in the secrets and legends of Hinduism, in the manner of worshipping idols, the fire, the sun and stars, and of revering the chief gods of these unbelievers, such as Brahmā, Mahādev, Bishn, Kishn, Rām, and Mahāmā. . . . He became especially firmly convinced of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and he much approved of the saying, 'There is no religion in which the doctrine of Transmigration has not a firm hold.'" [2] He was initiated into the secrets of Sanskrit mantrams and the practice of Yoga, and began to study the ancient superstition called alchemy, now made respectable under the name of synthetic chemistry. Akbar, no doubt, from his inexperience, was often imposed upon by the many yogis and fakirs he consulted, though he had a short way of dealing with charlatans when they were exposed. At one time a certain fakir at Lahore made a sensation by pretending to disappear as he was performing the customary ablutions in the river at the time of evening prayer, and simultaneously making his voice heard, apparently on the opposite side of the river, shouting to the person to whom he had just been talking. Akbar, being greatly interested in psychical research, sent for the man, took him to the bank of a river, either at Agra or Lahore, and commanded him to exhibit his powers, at the same time promising him an immense reward if he

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, vol. i, p. 103.
[2] Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, p. 265.

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could demonstrate a real miracle. The Emperor, no doubt, had taken his precautions against fraud, for the man was dumbfounded and made no answer. "Very well," said Akbar, "then we will bind you hand and foot and throw you from the top of the fort. If you come out of the water safe and sound, well and good; if not, you will have gone to hell." The miserable fakir then confessed that for the sake of filling his "hell of a stomach" he had played a simple trick. He had an accomplice, his son living on the city side of the river, who imitated his father's voice when the latter momentarily hid himself under the water on the other side.[1]

The numerous disputants of rival creeds who crowded Akbar's court soon found out that a practical test was the best way of convincing the Emperor of the wonder-working powers which each one claimed for his own religion. At one of the conferences on religion which Akbar had arranged a passionate discussion rose to white heat between the Christian priests and Muhammadan mullās on the question of the divine inspiration of the New Testament and the Qurān. The mullās became abusive, so that Akbar interposed, reproving them for their violence, and wound up the debate by an expression of his own opinion, which was the same as that stated in his 'happy sayings,' namely, that God should be worshipped through the intellect and not by a blind adherence to the supposed revelations of Scripture. One of the contending parties in the excitement of the moment shouted, "Let us make a peat fire, and in the presence of His Majesty we will pass through it, and whichever gets safely through will thereby prove the truth of his religion." Abul Fazl declares that the proposal came from the Christian "Padre Radulf [Rodolfo]," and that after Akbar had given permission the mullās refused to face the ordeal. Badāunī, on the other hand, puts the challenge in the mouth of the Shaikh Qutb-ud-dīn, and says that the priests declined to accept it. The records of the Jesuit Fathers support this version of the story, which *prima facie* is more credible. The practice of going through fire as

[1] Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, pp. 378–379.

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a test of faith is still current in India, and an Indian initiated into the secret of doing so without serious injury to himself would be more likely to make the proposal than an educated European of that time, for in the sixteenth century the age of miracles was already past in Europe.

Akbar gradually began to show a decided preference towards Hindu observances in matters of religious ritual and court ceremonial, though he continued to assert himself as the exponent of a new intellectual movement in Islam. His standpoint that religious faith must always be tested by the intellect, rather than by dogmatic statements put forward as divine revelation, was certainly a reflection of Hindu thought expressed in the ordinance that every prayer addressed to the Divine Spirit must be preceded by an invocation to Ganēsha, the iconic symbol of Reason. The Vishnu pillar upon which his throne was placed in the Diwān-i-Khās at Fatehpur was also an appeal to the ancient Vaishnava tradition which made the monarch God's representative on earth. The theory propounded by Akbar, that "a special grace proceeds from the sun in favour of kings, and for this reason they pray [to it] and consider it a worship of the Almighty," was likewise borrowed from the traditions of Rajput royalty. He did not, however, by any means conform to the fundamental principle of Hindu polity, by which the sovereign's supremacy was always subject to the constitutional laws of Āryāvarta—assumed to be one with the divine Vedas. Akbar's imperious will could brook no restraints upon his prerogatives except those which were self-imposed, and he maintained in principle and practice the autocratic traditions of Islam. From the day he assumed control of the government his will was law. He, and he alone, was the interpreter of God's will. "If I could but find any one capable of governing the kingdom I would at once place this burden upon his shoulders and withdraw therefrom. . . . It was the effect of the grace of God that I found no capable minister, otherwise people would have considered that my measures had been devised by them." [1]

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Jarrett's translation, vol. iii, p. 387.

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AKBAR AS SPIRITUAL LEADER

It was natural in a man of Akbar's temperament that he should eventually tire of listening to the din of wordy warfare which resounded in the audience halls of Fatehpur from morn to night without any prospect of a final reconciliation between the contending parties. As the discussions in the court debates gradually involved the fundamental principles of religion and the bases of Islamic belief were examined, the 'Ulamās became more and more violent in abuse of each other and of those who differed from them, and the differences between the reforming party of Islam, headed by the Shaikh Mubārak and his sons, and orthodox Musalmans appeared more hopelessly irreconcilable. The climax was reached about the end of 1578, when Abul Fazl in the Ibādat-Khāna put forward for discussion the proposition that the king should be regarded by his subjects not only as a temporal ruler but as a spiritual guide. Even the Sunni 'Ulamās might have agreed to it without demur if they had had no doubts of Akbár's orthodoxy. An Indian sultan, *de facto* if not *de jure*, often had a position analogous to that of the Khalif. It was his will, and not that of the 'Ulamās, which decided which of the seventy-two sects of Islam should be predominant in the State. A court mullā could easily assent to the formula that the king, as head of the Church, should be the arbitrator when the 'Ulamās disagreed on points of doctrine. But Abul Fazl's opponents knew too well the Pādshah's personal sympathies not to realize that their acceptance of the proposal meant the final triumph of Shaikh Mubārak's revolutionary propaganda. It therefore came as a bomb in the Sunni camp: prolonged and stormy discussions took place without any agreement being reached. While the dispute was at its height Akbar took a bold step which made any further opposition by the mullās an open defiance of his authority. He resolved to come forward publicly in the imperial mosque as the leader of Islam in India. Accordingly at the first Friday service of the month of Jumāda'l-awwāl in 1579 he took the place of the court imām and commenced to read the Khutba before the assembled court, to signify that henceforward the Pādshah would be

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the spiritual as well as the temporal head of the Empire of Hindustan. The Khutba ended, he began to recite a poem composed by Faizi to celebrate the solemn occasion:

> The Lord Who gave to us command,
> Gave us wisdom, heart and strength,
> Who guided us in law and right
> And turned our mind from unjust ways,
> Who can describe His power and state?
> Allāhu Akbar—God is great.

But before he had finished the third verse Akbar was overcome by emotion, and, descending from the pulpit, he left the rest of the service to the court *khatib*.

There were precedents, says Badāunī, for this proceeding in Mogul history, for Timūr and other Mogul monarchs had likewise read the Khutba in the Jāmi' Masjid. But there was no mistaking the significance of this occasion. The opposition to Abul Fazl's proposal collapsed, and soon afterwards a State document was issued under the signatures and seals of the Mukdūm-ul-Mulk, "of Shaikh Mubārak, the deepest writer of the age," "of Ghāzī Khan of Badakshān, who stood unrivalled in the various sciences," and other great authorities on Islamic law, which gave legal sanction to the Pādshah's assumption of the position of final arbiter in all matters of dispute regarding religious questions, and declared that his decisions should be binding both upon the 'Ulamās and on all subjects of the empire. The text of the document was as follows:

"Whereas Hindustan has now become the centre of security and peace, and the land of justice and beneficence, a large number of people, especially learned men and lawyers, have immigrated and chosen this country for their home. Now we, the principal 'Ulamās, who are not only well versed in the several departments of the Law and in the principles of jurisprudence, and well acquainted with the edicts which rest on reason or testimony, but are also known for our piety and honest intentions, have duly considered the deep meaning, first, of the verse of the Qurān [*Sur.* IV, 62], 'Obey God,

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and obey the Prophet, and those who have authority among you,' and secondly, of the genuine tradition, 'Surely the man who is dearest to God on the day of judgment is the Imām-i-'Adil: whosoever obeys the Amīr, obeys Me; and whosoever rebels against him, rebels against Me,' and thirdly, of several other proofs based on reasoning or testimony; and we have agreed that the rank of Sultan-i-'Adil [a just ruler] is higher in the eyes of God than the rank of a Mujtahid [an infallible authority]. Further, we declare that the King of the Islām, Amīr of the Faithful, Shadow of God in the world, Abul Fath Jalāl-ud-dīn Muhammad Akbar Pādshah Ghāzī—whose kingdom God perpetuate—is a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing king. Should, therefore, in future a religious question come up regarding which the opinions of the Mujtahids are at variance, and His Majesty, in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom, be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation and as a political expedient, any of the conflicting opinions which exist on that point, and issue a decree to that effect, we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and on the whole nation.

"Further we declare that, should His Majesty think fit to issue a new order, we and the nation shall likewise be bound by it, provided always that such order be not only in accordance with some verse of the Qurān, but also of real benefit to the nation; and further, that any opposition on the part of his subjects to such an order passed by His Majesty shall involve damnation in the world to come, and loss of property and religious privileges in this.[1]

"This document has been written with honest intentions, for the glory of God and the propagation of Islām, and is signed by us, the principal 'Ulamās and lawyers, in the month of Rajab of the year 987" (September 1579).[2]

[1] This damnatory clause may be considered as wholly opposed to Akbar's tolerant views in religious matters; it was probably used as a common legal formula and not intended to be taken literally.

[2] Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, pp. 279–280.

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This famous document was drafted by Shaikh Mubārak, and Badāunī declares that all but he signed it unwillingly, apparently for fear of losing the Pādshah's favour—a curious comment on their "honest intentions." But Badāunī's testimony in all religious questions is suspect: he was a bitter, disappointed man who, while accepting the hospitality of the Shaikh and his sons, was writing his secret history in which he vented his malice against his hosts, although they continued to show him the greatest kindness and often used their influence to protect him from Akbar's displeasure.

About the same time as Akbar thus formally assumed the spiritual leadership of Islam he took into his own hands the administration of the department of Crown domains, which included the granting of *sayurgāls* or *madad-i ma'āsh* [1]—lands given by the Crown as benevolences. They were distinguished from *jāgirs* or *tuyūl* lands, which were estates granted, in return for military service, for the maintenance of officers and their retainers. The former were held to be gifts, remaining in the possession of the owner and his descendants *in perpetuo*; the latter were only conferred on the officers (*mausabdars*) so long as they held the king's commission, in lieu of salary.

We have seen already that according to Indo-Aryan constitutional law the Crown domains were considered as the monarch's share of communal lands, assigned by the Aryan community to their ruler in return for the services he rendered as Protector of the State. The sayurgāl lands, under the Muhammadan *régime*, corresponded to the grants given from the Crown domains as rewards to Brahmans or other men of learning, the court poets, master-builders and artists, etc., whom the king delighted to honour—grants given, as a rule, without religious prejudice, though the king often discriminated in favour of his own special cult. The jāgirs corresponded to the estates held by Kshatriya or Rajput chieftains as fiefs bestowed by the Crown, and liable to be resumed at the pleasure of their overlord. On purely religious grounds it was comparatively easy for Muhammadan rulers to come to an understanding

[1] 'Assistance of livelihood.'

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with their Hindu subjects. On the land question there was an irreconcilable difference which could only be fought out to the bitter end *vi et armis*. Islam refused to recognize the rights of the Aryan freeman so long as he remained an unbeliever. Theoretically his lands, money, jewels, and everything he possessed—even his own person and those of his wife and family—were at the king's disposal for the benefit of the faithful. If the Commander of the Faithful or his representative suffered them to live or to retain their hereditary possessions it was only for the convenience of the elect. In practice, of course, even the most bigoted of Musalman monarchs found it convenient to allow their Hindu subjects of the agricultural classes to remain in undisturbed possession of their lands, as long as they paid the *jizya* and other special taxes on infidels, and did not resist the king's officers. But by the wholesale destruction of monasteries and temples and the massacre of monks and priests the soldiers of Islam not only secured a vast amount of booty in the form of gold, silver, and jewels, but enormously increased the extent of ownerless land at the disposal of the Crown, for many of the original proprietors who escaped massacre or slavery were turned adrift to earn a subsistence either as religious mendicants or as revenue-collectors for the Musalman.

The administration of the Crown domains, so far as concerns the sayurgāls, under Muhammadan rule was in charge of the Çadi-i-Jahān, the highest law officer of the Crown, who possessed an almost unlimited authority of conferring such lands independently of the king. He was also the highest ecclesiastical law officer, and often exercised the powers of a High Inquisitor.[1] The office of Çadi-i-Jahān had been held for many years before the events above recorded by the Shaikh Abdunnabi, one of the signatories to the document, whose name is often mentioned in the accounts of the court debates. Many years before he had conspired with the Mukdūm-ul-Mulk to bring about the death of Shaikh Mubārak, and as a leader of the Sunni faction he could be trusted to see that no

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann's translation, vol. i, pp. 270–271.

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sayurgāls were ever bestowed upon any but orthodox Musalmans. Akbar had appointed him, trusting to his honesty, when he discovered that the whole department was a hotbed of bribery and corruption, and Abdunnabi had been instrumental in bringing back to the Crown a great many of the sayurgāls which had been so lavishly distributed by Shēr Shah among his Afghan clansmen and retainers. The imperial revenue, however, did not benefit much on account of the Shaikh's prodigality in the redistribution of the sayurgāls—and his favours were not bestowed disinterestedly. He lavished upon his *protégés*, says Badāunī, "whole worlds of subsistence allowances, lands and pensions, so much so that if you place the grants of all former kings of Hindustan on one scale and those of the Shaikh on the other, his scale would weigh more." "But," he adds regretfully, "several years later the scale went up, as it had been under former kings, and matters took an adverse turn." The reason was that rumours eventually reached Akbar's ears of what went on in the department. In 1578 he got rid of Abdunnabi, and at the same time put an end to the disgraceful scenes which often took place in the court debates by packing off both the Shaikh and the Mukdūm-ul-Mulk—now sworn enemies—to Mekka in charge of the pilgrims from Hindustan. Akbar was skilful in making the punishment fit the crime, for the custodians of the holy places at Mekka were notorious for their unscrupulous fleecing of pilgrims. According to Blochmann there was a proverb current in the East, "The Devil dwells in Mekka and Medina."[1] Akbar then appointed Khwāja Sultan as Çadi, but took the administration of the department into his own hands by ordering that all those who held more than five hundred *bighahs* of land should bring their *farmans* to court for inspection, or in default forfeit their sayurgāls. The whole department was vigorously overhauled by Abul Fazl with a view to a more impartial distribution of State bounty and a general cleansing of this Augean stable. It may be believed that the wails of the faithful who had thus to render an account of their

[1] Translation of *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, vol. i, p. 273 *n*.

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possessions went up to heaven. Badāunī gives a pitiful account of the sufferings endured by the families of the "great and noble and the renowned and famous" who lost respect; of the schools and mosques which were closed for lack of endowments; how "science and scientific men fell in estimation"; and, worst of all, how lands were given to "men of no renown, to low fellows, even to Hindus."

The Qāzīs, the subordinates of the Çadi in the provinces, raised the cry of 'Islam in danger,' and one of them, the Qāzī of Jaunpur, soon after Akbar's reading of the Khutba in the mosque of Fatehpur, issued a *fatwa* insisting on the duty of rebelling against the Pādshah. The Afghan zamindars, always ready to respond to such a call, took up arms. Akbar's brother, Mirza Hakīm, the ruler of Kabul, seized the opportunity to march into the Panjab and lay siege to Lahore. Akbar sent his foster-brother, the Khan-i-'Azam, though he was by no means in sympathy with the Pādshah's religious ideas, to suppress the rebellion in Jaunpur, and himself took the field against Hakīm. The Mirza was compelled to retreat, and Akbar entered Kabul without opposition. Hakīm was pursued to the mountains and then begged forgiveness. Akbar readily granted it and restored him to his kingdom. He died in 1585, when Akbar removed his court from Fatehpur to Lahore, which place remained his headquarters for thirteen years.

As already mentioned, peace was not fully restored in Bihār and Bengal until 1592. In the meantime Nathū or Muzaffar Shah, the late ruler of Gujerat, another of the recipients of Akbar's generosity, again made himself the tool of the Pādshah's bitter enemies. Together with a number of his old associates he raised a rebellion, and marched to Ahmadābād, which he took without much difficulty, together with the contents of the imperial treasury. With this and other booty he was enabled to raise an army of forty thousand men, which compelled the Mogul forces to retire to Patān. Akbar immediately sent Abdurrāhīm, the son of Bairām Khan, with reinforcements to take supreme command. He proved worthy

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of his father's reputation, for with only ten thousand cavalry he attacked Muzaffar Shah at Sarkij, near Ahmadābād, forced the enemy back to the city, and drove them through it with great slaughter. He afterwards defeated the ex-Sultan a second time near Nādot. For these victories Akbar made him governor of the province and raised his position in the army to the same as his father had held—that of a Khan Khanān, a title equivalent to that of Field-Marshal. Muzaffar Shah's rebellion was by no means ended by these defeats. He fled to the hill tracts of Gujerat, and with the assistance of various chieftains continued to make constant raids into the province. It was many years before order was restored in that part of the empire.

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CHAPTER XIX

THE DĪN-ILĀHĪ

AKBAR'S attention to spiritual affairs was not for a moment diverted by these and other commotions in different parts of his empire, or by the reforms he initiated in departmental matters. The formal debates in the Ibādat-Khāna came to an end soon after the principal 'Ulamās had accepted the Pādshah's spiritual authority, but the religious excitement, which was general at the time and by no means confined to court circles, continued to be a most important factor in politics. Indeed Akbar's assumption of the leadership of Islam must be considered not only as a means of curbing the arrogant temper of the 'Ulamās, but as an act of far-seeing statesmanship intended to ensure the peace of Hindustan and the security of the Mogul dynasty. Politics and religion in India had always been inseparable. No ruler had succeeded or could succeed in establishing a perfect political equilibrium in India by the sword alone.

The psychic atmosphere of Hinduism was still electric with the religious fervour excited by Chaitānya's mission, thirty years before Akbar's time, and the near approach of the millennium continued to agitate the mind of Islam. Akbar's fine political intuition must have told him that if the head of the State refused to take the lead and guide the empire through this critical period there would certainly not be wanting religious fanatics to disturb the minds of his subjects and possibly create a storm beyond his power to control. He had sought for and failed to find a man of light and leading who would fully satisfy his own craving for spiritual enlightenment and command the entire confidence of the people. It was not, therefore, mere vanity which prompted him at last

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to listen to the suggestions made by his courtiers—some prompted by mean motives and others by sincere admiration for the brilliant gifts of their high-minded sovereign—that he was "the Çahib-i-Zamān who would remove all differences of opinion among the seventy-two sects of the Islām and the Hindus."[1] Outside the court, also, many prophecies were quoted which in the popular imagination pointed to the Pādshah as the promised Māhdi.

Akbar proceeded cautiously and with a scrupulous regard for Indian tradition in his plans for adapting the doctrine of Islam to the spirit of the age. For establishing his authority on an unshakable foundation it was necessary, above all things, to appeal to the religious sense of the people. He began to feel his way by using in public the formula "There is no God but Allah and Akbar is His Khalifa" as a summary of the teaching of the new Islam. This was in reality an adaptation of the Vaishnava doctrine which made the king, as Protector of the people, the representative of God on earth. Finding, however, that it created dissatisfaction among orthodox Musalmans, Akbar revived an Indo-Aryan tradition, sanctified by pious associations of thousands of years, and founded a new Order, or Sangha, open to all Indians, called the Dīn-Ilāhī, or Divine Faith, with that formula as its password. It was a royal Order similar to that which Marco Polo noted in the courts of South Indian kings in the thirteenth century; the badge of the Order was the Pādshah's portrait, which the members wore on the top of their turbans. The bhakti which was to be the inspiration of its members was whole-hearted devotion to the State, represented by the sovereign.

As in the Sangha of the Buddha, there were four paths,[2] or four degrees, within the Order. The bhaktas of the first degree were those who were ready to sacrifice to the Pādshah all their worldly goods; those of the second degree must be

[1] Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, p. 295.

[2] In the Buddhist Order the four paths were: (1) that of the Stream-Attainer; (2) of the Once-Returner; (3) of the Never-Returner; and (4) of Arahantship. See *Buddhism*, Mrs Rhys Davids, p. 173.

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prepared to sacrifice their life in his service; those of the third were expected to entrust their honour to his keeping; and those of the fourth and highest degree were to accept the Pādshah's religious views as their own.[1] All the courtiers, says Badāunī, became novitiates of the Order; but apparently few attained to the highest degree. Some, indeed, resolutely refused to accept Akbar's guidance in religious matters and continued to repeat their accustomed forms of prayer even in the presence of the Pādshah, after a special religious ritual had been prescribed for the court. It is greatly to Akbar's credit that though he often tried to influence his most valued officials by argument, he always respected the 'conscientious objector' and never used his authority tyrannically to compel anyone to accept membership of his Order. Akbar frequently banished from his dominions any shaikhs, mullās, fakirs, and others whom he considered to be dangerous to the State, but never on account of their religious beliefs.

Badāunī attacks the Dīn-Ilāhī violently as an organization intended for the subversion of the creed of the Prophet, and treats all of Akbar's ritualistic innovations as clear proofs of his apostasy. But certainly Akbar himself did not intend it as such, nor was it so regarded by the learned and pious Musalmans who were his chief advisers. The latter accepted it not as a 'new religion,' but as a religious brotherhood for uniting the seventy-two sects of Islam and Indians of other beliefs in the common aim of serving the State and securing the spiritual and temporal advantage of Hindustan in the new era which was about to commence. There was the Prophet's own authority for assuming that the millennium would usher in a new dispensation which would continue his own mission to mankind and establish it on a broader basis. When, therefore, Akbar was armed with full powers by the 'Ulamās he

[1] In all probability the five-storied pavilion at Fatehpur-Sikri, known as the Panch Mahāll, and planned after the ancient Indian pyramidal monastic assembly halls, was the chapter-house of the Order. The domed pavilion on the top would be the place where Akbar, as Grand Master of the Order, took his seat, and the four lower stories must have been the assembly halls of the members divided according to their degrees.

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could with perfect consistency introduce the ritualistic reforms he thought most fitting for inaugurating the new era in accordance with the Prophet's revelation. But as in all creeds there are many who cling to time-honoured forms and ceremonies as the essential part of religion, so there were many staunch Musalmans, like Badāunī, who were horrified at any proposal for revising the established ritual of Islam. When Akbar regulated divine worship by the sun and used fire and light as symbols of divine power the orthodox railed at him as a Parsi or Hindu unbeliever, regardless of the fact that Islam itself, like every other creed, fixed its festivals and religious observances by the same means. When he enjoined members of the Order to abstain from eating meat, to be content with one wife—except she should be barren—and allowed Musalman youth to consider for themselves the propriety of the rite of circumcision, he also gave mortal offence to the narrow-minded sectarian.

In 1582, which corresponded to the tenth year before the Muhammadan millennium, Akbar, with his usual far-seeing political instinct resolved to anticipate matters by formally inaugurating the new era. A decree was then issued fixing the commencement of the Ilāhī era at the year of the Pādshah's accession to the throne,[1] and ordering that this reckoning should be stamped on the imperial coinage and used in all official documents. The Arabic computation of time, dating from the flight of the Prophet, was changed for a solar year, divided into months named after those of ancient Persia, and the court festivals were rearranged after the same system. State patronage was no longer to be given to the old-fashioned Arabic learning, but the study of philosophy, astronomy, medicine, mathematics, poetry, history, and imaginative literature was to be encouraged. At the same time Akbar showed respect for the founder of the Muslim faith by ordering that a *Tārīkh-i Alfī*, or a history of the thousand years from the

[1] This was in strict accordance with Indian tradition, for the principal Hindu eras had also been fixed from the year of the consecration of those kings who had won the name of a *Chakra-vartin*, or universal monarch.

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death of the Prophet, should be prepared by the imperial librarians. In accordance with the traditions of Islam, he also appointed a Privy Council of forty members, corresponding to the *Chihil tanān*, the forty true Musalmans who by God's grace were always to exist on earth as representatives of the Prophet. In the same year two of the grandees of the court returned from the pilgrimage to Mekka bringing with them a huge stone, so heavy that a very strong elephant was required to transport it, which was believed to show the imprint of the Prophet's foot. In deference to the feelings of his Musalman subjects, Akbar went out to meet it with his whole court, and by the Pādshah's command the amīrs took turns in carrying it a few steps on the way to the capital.

Various changes now made by Akbar in court ceremonial and in the ritual of divine service were by no means pleasing to Musalmans of the old school. Nor were they more gratified by Akbar's endeavours to remove the disabilities and to lighten the burdens which former Musalman rulers had imposed upon the Hindus. In the previous year Akbar had abolished a number of vexatious tolls and customs which produced so large a revenue that "no king," it was said, "would have remitted them without divine guidance." [1] Rāja Todar Mall was now appointed *Diwān* and entrusted with the great work of reforming the administration of land revenue throughout the empire. Abul Fazl makes clear in one sentence the whole difference between Shēr Shah's and Akbar's land policy: "The *raiyats* were to be so treated that they should be willing to make their payments to the treasury voluntarily." [2] The Rāja did his duty honestly and well as a member of the Dīn-Ilāhī. "Careful to keep himself free from all selfish ambition, he devoted himself to the service of the State and earned an everlasting fame. He devoted his skill and powerful mind to simplifying the laws of the State, and he allowed no grasping and intriguing men to obtain any influence over him." [3] Musal-

[1] Elliot, vol. v, p. 414.
[2] *Akbar-nāma*; the twenty-seventh year of the reign—revenue regulations.
[3] *Ibid.*

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mans were made to respect the religious susceptibilities of their Hindu brethren by an ordinance forbidding the eating of beef. At the same time Akbar prohibited Hindu customs which were injurious or immoral, such as early marriages and compulsory *sati*.

The essence of the Dīn-Ilāhī was contained in this high-minded and unflinching devotion to the common weal which Akbar himself showed in the highest degree, and expected from those who were admitted to membership of his Order. In this sense the 'new religion,' though it may have numbered few thoroughly sincere devotees among the Musalman and Hindu aristocracy, made a profound and lasting impression upon the masses. Thousands flocked to the polo-ground of Fatehpur to receive the bounty which Akbar, according to a time-honoured custom of Indian royalty, lavished upon the poor without distinction of caste or creed. When the Pādshah appeared at the Jaroka window of the palace every morning to say his prayers and show himself to his subjects, crowds of Hindus assembled determined to begin the day auspiciously with the sight of Vishnu's Vicegerent on earth. In the evening, Badāunī adds sneeringly, "there was a regular court assembly of needy Hindus and Musalmans, all sorts of people, men and women, healthy and sick, a queer gathering and a most terrible crowd." And when Akbar, says his devoted friend Abul Fazl, left his palace "to settle the affairs of a province, to conquer a kingdom, or to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, there is not a hamlet, a town, or a city that does not send forth crowds of men and women with vow-offerings in their hands and prayers on their lips, touching the ground with their foreheads, praising the efficacy of their vows, or proclaiming the accounts of the spiritual assistance received. Other multitudes ask for lasting bliss, for an upright heart, for advice how best to act for strength of the body, for the birth of a son." In short, the Indian people, with their deep religious sense, willingly assented to the doctrine that "a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing King" was fit to be the spiritual leader of his subjects and were eager to be enrolled in the Order of the Dīn-Ilāhī.

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THE DĪN-ILĀHĪ

As a political institution the Dīn-Ilāhī entirely fulfilled Akbar's hopes. It stirred the imagination of the Indian masses so deeply that Akbar bequeathed to his descendants a legacy of devoted loyalty to his dynasty incomparably richer than any Musalman ruler before him had given to his successors. But historians, both Indian and European, have made a profound mistake in adopting Badāunī's prejudiced view of it as a 'new religion' propagated by Akbar in opposition to the fundamental doctrines of Islam. The religious principles of the Dīn-Ilāhī only summed up those of the most cultured and enlightened Indian Musalmans of the sixteenth century; but the mere fact that these principles made it possible for Musalmans and Hindus to worship God at the same shrine and with a common ritual was enough to condemn Akbar as a hopeless heretic in the eyes of the faithful who clung to the literal interpretation of the Sunna, the traditional law of Islam. Akbar's answer to the charge was characteristic. When the King of Tūrān, Abdulla Khan Uzbek, wrote to him regarding the reports he had heard of the Pādshah's apostasy he replied: "Of God people have said that He had a son; of the Prophet some have said that he was a sorcerer. Neither God nor the Prophet has escaped the slander of men —then how should I?" [1]

In the latter years of his reign, provoked by the implacable hostility of the Sunnis, Akbar showed an open contempt for their sectarian prejudices, which did much to strengthen the case against him from the standpoint of the orthodox Musalman.[2] But the best evidence that the Dīn-Ilāhī was not what it was represented to be by Akbar's enemies lies in the fact

[1] Blochmann, *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, vol. i, p. 468.

[2] The conversion of Muhammadan mosques to secular uses was an instance which Akbar's enemies seized upon as justification for their reckless abuse. The orthodox Musalman chose to forget that it had been the settled policy of many former rulers to desecrate Hindu temples and convert them into mosques, often solely for the purpose of outraging the feelings of the Hindus. In Akbar's time there must have been thousands of such mosques in Hindustan rarely or never used for divine worship. To give them back to Hindus might have been regarded as an insult to Islam. Akbar adopted the wisest and justest course in adapting them for secular purposes.

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that its religious teaching, in spite of its popularity with the masses, failed to attract any considerable number of the higher classes of Hindus. The orthodox educated Hindu refused to accept Akbar as an exponent of the esoteric teaching of the Vedas, although the ritual of the Dīn-Ilāhī was to a great extent borrowed from Hinduism. Of the eighteen principal members of the Order mentioned by Badāunī all were Muhammadans except Rāja Bīrbal, who belonged to an inferior class of Brahmans. Among them was Akbar's brilliant and accomplished foster-brother, 'Azam Khan Kokah, a staunch Musalman and a man of very independent character, who for a long time was opposed to Akbar's tolerant religious principles and boldly ridiculed both his sovereign and the Dīn-Ilāhī. He even went so far as to make a demonstration of his disapproval by absenting himself from court and disobeying Akbar's orders to return. But a pilgrimage to Mekka, where he suffered like others from the rapacity of the guardians of the holy places, altered considerably his views upon Musalman orthodoxy, and immediately on his return to India he shocked Badāunī by accepting Abul Fazl as his spiritual teacher, cut off his beard, joined the Order, and thenceforth took a prominent part in its social gatherings.

Mr Vincent Smith[1] says that "the new creed was accepted by a few time-serving courtiers . . . but it never attained any real vogue, and probably was practically extinct even before Akbar's death." He, like other writers, entirely misunderstands the scope of the Dīn-Ilāhī and its connection with Indian traditions of pre-Muhammadan times. The political importance of the Order was far greater than he suggests—even though Akbar's graceless son, Jahāngīr, ignored it—and his sweeping charge of insincerity against members of the Order, not excepting great men like Shaikh Mubārak, Faizi, and Abul Fazl, is without any historical justification. Akbar, though deeply absorbed in spiritual questions, was far more a statesman and empire-builder than a religious propagandist. He was a profound student of Indian history

[1] *Asiatic Review*, July 1915.

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and made a direct appeal to the deepest feelings of his subjects by giving his Sangha a religious character, but his motives in founding the Dīn-Ilāhī were political rather than religious. And neither the aims of the Order nor its place in the history of the period can be properly appreciated unless it is understood as one of the instruments by which Akbar tried to effect his purpose of consolidating the Mogul Empire by obliterating the sense of a foreign domination from the minds of his people and bringing the polity of Islam into line with that of the Aryan rulers of India.

But it was Akbar's great administrative reforms, mostly introduced at the time of the founding of the Order or afterwards, and his earnest endeavour to live up to the Aryan ideal of "a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing King" which roused the enthusiasm of the people of Hindustan for the Dīn-Ilāhī and made them, in Abul Fazl's words, "look upon their conversion to the New Faith as a means of obtaining every blessing." [1] The religious message of the Dīn-Ilāhī was by no means a new one—not even for Musalmans, much less for Hindus. The startling innovation, denounced by Muhammadan orthodoxy as rank heresy and welcomed by Hindus as a divine revelation bringing blessings to all who received it, was that henceforth in Hindustan all political and social disqualifications on account of religious differences were to be swept away. Islam of the new era proclaimed that "divine grace is shed upon all alike" [2] and that no man should suffer on account of the way he chose for worshipping God. Regarded in this light the influence of the Dīn-Ilāhī was far-reaching, and continued long after the dissolution of the Order upon Akbar's death.

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Blochmann, vol. i, p. 165.
[2] *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, Jarrett's translation, vol. iii. p. 381.

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CHAPTER XX

AKBAR AS CHAKRA-VARTIN

IN 1585 Akbar drew closer the ties which united the Mogul dynasty with the Hindu aristocracy by marrying his eldest son, Prince Salīm, or Sultan Jahāngīr, with the daughter of Rāja Bhagwān Dās. In the same year he found it expedient, upon the death of his brother, Mirza Hakīm—who, as before stated, had been restored to the government of Kabul after the suppression of his rebellion in 1581—to leave Fatehpur and make Lahore his capital, so that he might have a firmer grip upon the affairs of the north-west frontier. Lahore remained his headquarters until 1598. In these thirteen years Akbar was actively engaged in directing the military operations necessary for maintaining the position he had assumed as a Chakra-vartin—the supreme war-lord of India. Since the days of Chandragupta Maurya it had been a fixed principle of Indo-Aryan polity that for the successful defence of Āryāvarta from foreign aggression it was always expedient, if not absolutely necessary, to concentrate the strength of her Kshatriya defenders under the banner of a Chakra-vartin. History had repeatedly demonstrated the soundness of the theory and it had always been recognized as the ideal of Kshatriya statesmanship, but, unfortunately for India, the mutual jealousies of rival war-lords had made it difficult to maintain that principle in practice, and very few of the Aryan rulers of India had been able to reach to it.

Since the Muhammadan invasion 'Alā-ud-dīn had been the exponent of the doctrine of *Kultur* and 'frightfulness' on the side of Islam who had come nearest to this position. Before Akbar there had been some Musalman monarchs of alien race, like Husain Shah of Jaunpur, who had discovered the secret

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of wise, just, and God-fearing government which would make alien domination wholly acceptable to the people of India; but Husain Shah had been driven from his throne, and none of them had extended their political powers so far as to claim the suzerainty of the 'Five Indies' like Harsha. Outside the limits of the Mogul Empire Muhammadan government in India was now rotten to the core, with no prospect of amendment from inside. Akbar was therefore perfectly justified in considering that he was consulting the interests both of the Mogul dynasty and of India herself in using his military strength to restore order throughout Āryāvarta, when milder measures were certainly inadequate.

Akbar's first step was to secure his north-western frontier from an attack which threatened from the Uzbeks of Tūrān, under their ambitious ruler, Abdulla Khan, who had driven Mirza Ṣulaiman, a prince of the house of Timūr, out of Badakshān and now had his eyes on Kabul. As soon as this purpose was effected Akbar despatched one of the imperial armies under the command of Rāja Bhagwān Dās to undertake the conquest of Kashmīr and another to punish the refractory tribes in North-eastern Afghanistan. A third expedition was directed against the Balūchis, who had also given trouble. Kashmīr had been under Musalman government since the fourteenth century, but the valley was now distracted by dynastic disputes. The cause of the unrest in the Swat country was an outburst of religious fanaticism. Early in Akbar's reign a Hindustani soldier had set himself up as a Māhdi, under the name of Raushenāī, 'the Enlightened One,' and had won many enthusiastic followers among the Yūsufzāīs and other Afghan tribes, especially on account of the doctrine that his faithful disciples were to be rewarded by the possession of all the lands and property of unbelievers—which in all ages and among all sects acts as a powerful stimulus to religious zeal. The Raushenāīs had given much trouble in previous years, until their prophets ventured to descend from the inaccessible hilly regions and meet the Mogul forces in the plains. There the Afghan tribesmen met with severe punishment and

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were forced to retire to their native fastnesses. Their Māhdi died soon afterwards, but in spite of his failure as a war-lord his reputation for sanctity survived his death. His remains were guarded as sacred relics, and his youngest son, upon whom the prophet's mantle had fallen, kept the flames of religious fervour alive and the north-west frontier of India in a perpetual state of ferment.

The Balūchistān expedition was soon brought to a successful conclusion, but it was not until the middle of 1587 that the imperial armies, assisted by the internal disorders of the country, broke through the passes of Kashmīr and made it a part of the Mogul Empire. Akbar visited Srinagar in the spring of the following year, but the state of Hindustan and his own energetic temperament did not permit him to indulge in the luxury of a periodical exodus to the hills, which Jahāngīr and Shah Jahān enjoyed in sumptuous ease.

The Swat expedition was an even more difficult business, and involved the Mogul forces in serious reverses. As soon as the imperialist troops entered the Swat valley the Yūsufzāīs, although they had ceased to believe in the divine inspiration of the pretended Māhdi, made common cause with the Raushenāīs and offered a desperate resistance to the invaders. Zain Khan, the Mogul general, defeated them in twenty-three fights, and established fortified posts to keep them in check; but the constant activity of the wily enemy eventually exhausted his troops and he was compelled to ask for reinforcements.

Akbar seems not to have realised the seriousness of the situation, for his judgment in the appointment of the two commanders of the relieving army was singularly at fault. He chose two of his favourite courtiers, Rāja Bīrbal and Hakīm Abul Fath, neither of whom had any special qualifications or experience in military affairs, though at the Mogul court every man of rank was assumed to be a soldier. Rāja Bīrbal was a poet and musician; his sparkling wit and good-humour won him general popularity as well as the Pādshah's favour. Abul Fath was an accomplished Musalman scholar

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and an expert on questions of religious doctrine who had held high administrative appointments. Unfortunately, they were not on good terms with each other, and as soon as the relieving force joined Zain Khan's command the three generals began to give the enemy the benefit of divided counsels by quarrelling vigorously—a situation which must have seemed as humorous to the Afghan chieftains as one of Bīrbal's jests. The result of the campaign can be easily anticipated. Bīrbal, with the prestige of court favour at his back, succeeded in upsetting Zain Khan's careful and methodical plan of campaign in the vain belief that the agile tribesmen could be easily crushed by the superior strength and organisation of the Mogul war-machine. So long as the operations were confined to the open country all went well with the campaign. The Yūsufzāīs were driven into the mountains and their villages and lands were laid waste. But directly the imperial troops, with their war-elephants and complicated supply service, attempted to force their way further into the difficult and dangerous mountains, where it was impossible to keep up communications, the tribesmen swarming on the heights above harassed them unceasingly. At last the imperialists began to be demoralised, and a retreat became necessary, which ended in a great catastrophe. Rāja Bīrbal in a night march was inveigled into an ambuscade in a narrow defile, where his troops were cut to pieces and he himself, with many other officers, was killed. Zain Khan made a gallant but hopeless attempt to keep the rest of his panic-stricken army together, but the Yūsufzāīs gave him no chance, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he and Abul Fath escaped on foot to the fortress of Attock.

Akbar was even more grieved by the loss of his favourite poet and jester than by the disaster to the imperial arms, and for a long time clung to the hope that he might still be alive, for the Rāja's body was never found. Rumours reached the Pādshah's ears that Bīrbal, being ashamed to reappear at court, was wandering about the hills in the disguise of a sannyāsin. When this proved to be only village gossip a more

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circumstantial story became current of a barber who had been recognised as the missing Bīrbal by certain marks on his body. Akbar sent urgent orders to the collectors of the district that the barber should be brought to court at once. The officials, to satisfy the Pādshah's demand and save themselves further trouble, pretended that a criminal who had been condemned to death was the person sought for, and sent a report that he had died on the way to Lahore. Akbar went into mourning a second time, and severely punished the officials for neglect of duty in not having sent the man directly he was identified. But now, as in previous emergencies, he chose his two most trusted and experienced Rajput generals, Rājas Mān Singh and Todar Mall, to retrieve the errors of the disastrous campaign. They soon succeeded in driving back the Yūsufzāīs and in coming to an arrangement with them which enabled the imperial armies to deal with the Raushenāīs and their new Māhdi, Jalāla, in the south and west of Kabul. By 1588, after much hard fighting, the north-west frontier of the empire was brought to a tolerable state of order by the decisive defeat of Jalāla in the Khaibar Pass and the establishment of fortified posts which compelled the turbulent tribesmen to retire to their mountain fastnesses; but the Raushenāīs continued to be aggressive until the end of Akbar's reign and long afterwards. Mān Singh was appointed to the governorship of Kabul, but as the Afghans were dissatisfied at a Hindu being placed over them, Akbar soon afterwards transferred him to Bengal and gave them a Musalman governor.

Another campaign of two years' duration, from 1588 to 1590, directed by Mirza Abdurrāhīm, the son of Bairām Khan, ended with the conquest and annexation of Sind. The Khan-i-'Azam soon afterwards quelled a rebellion in Gujerat and took possession of two more principalities, Kāthiāwār and Katch, in the name of the Pādshah. In 1592 Rāja Mān Singh, in command of the imperial army in Bengal, added to the signal services he had rendered to the Mogul cause by the subjugation of Orissa. He was now the premier Hindu prince

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serving in the imperial army, for Akbar had lost two of his most able and devoted Rajput adherents, Rājas Bhagwān Dās and Todar Mall, who died on the same day in 1589. The steadfast loyalty, conspicuous ability, and high character of these three Rajput chieftains had contributed more than anything else to the security of Akbar's throne and the contentment of the Indian people.

The Pādshah's authority now extended over an empire far greater than that of Harsha. With the exception of the Rāna of Mewār's territory, which remained in the midst of the Mogul Empire as the last independent stronghold of Indo-Aryan royalty, he was undisputed master of the whole of the ancient Āryāvarta from the Himālayas to the Narbadā river, and was recognised by the vast majority of his Hindu subjects as fulfilling their ideal of an Aryan monarch, although four centuries of Muhammadan rule and the considerable dilution of the Aryan element in the population had dimmed the memories of the golden days when Āryāvarta was the most advanced in true culture and civilisation, the freest and richest of all countries in Asia or in Europe. The village communities and townships had indeed lost the political influence they possessed under Hindu rule; the village elders were no longer addressed by State officials in terms of respect which belonged to royalty. But they were again left free in the management of local affairs; the burden of oppressive taxation had been removed; justice was impartially administered; Hindus enjoyed exactly the same political and social rights as the ruling race, the Moguls, and as the native Musalmans. Almost half of the imperial armies was Hindu,[1] and individually every Hindu was as free as any of Akbar's subjects, for it was not a mere academic theory that the highest offices of State, military and civil, were open to him—they were, in fact, usually occupied by Indians and Hindus whose abilities commended them to the Pādshah. The Dīn-Ilāhī, moreover, was a bold attempt on Akbar's part to give back to the people a share in the management of the spiritual affairs of the empire such as

[1] Badāunī, Lowe's translation, vol. ii, p. 350.

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they had when Harsha-Vardhana convoked the General Assembly of the Sangha at Kanauj to listen to the arguments of the Master of the Law.

Further than this in the path of constitutional reform no Musalman monarch, Indian or foreign, could have gone. It was, indeed, a signal proof of Akbar's extraordinary power as a statesman and of his influence in Islam that he could go so far without provoking a general revolt of his Musalman subjects. But Akbar owed much to the time in which he lived and the country in which he was born. It probably would have been impossible for him to have achieved so much in any earlier period of Muhammadan domination in India, or in any other country than India. From a Mogul and dynastic point of view the success of his policy was equally remarkable. The imperial army was not only a war-machine thoroughly well equipped and drilled to a high state of efficiency; it was animated by the highest spirit of patriotism and recognised by the people as their own defence against misrule and foreign aggression—a political factor of incalculable importance for the future of the Mogul Empire. Though the burden of taxation upon agriculture and trade had been greatly lightened, the imperial revenue had enormously increased and the treasuries were filled to overflowing. No other monarch in Asia or in Europe could command the wealth which Akbar had at his disposal for providing the sinews of war, and no other monarch was better served by his officers and men. And the insecurity, misery, and misrule which had been prevalent over the greater part of Hindustan at the beginning of Akbar's reign had given place to order, contentment, and prosperity in little more than thirty years. Akbar's system of civil administration was essentially bureaucratic, but no bureaucracy was ever more efficient both in promoting the welfare of the State and in reconciling the rulers with the ruled. His government was not only more efficient than that of any former Musalman ruler of India, but it was more permanent in its effects; its excellent organisation maintained the solidity of the Mogul Empire long after his personal influence

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was gone—both in the stormy reign of the cynical and egotistical Jahāngīr, to whom the ethics of the Dīn-Ilāhī were foolishness, and in that of Akbar's favourite grandchild, the prodigal *grand seigneur* Shah Jahān, when Hindustan again enjoyed a long unbroken peace. It was not until Aurangzīb, the iconoclast, revived the narrow and intolerant political principles of Muhammadan orthodoxy and crushed underfoot the free institutions of Āryāvarta which had survived the storms of centuries that the splendid fabric of Akbar's statesmanship began to fall into ruin—a ruin so complete that the Aryans of the West have hardly yet begun to recognise the handiwork of their forerunners in the East or to understand the sources whence Akbar drew his inspiration as a statesman.

In 1594 Akbar further strengthened the defences of his empire on the north-west frontier by the recovery of the fortress of Kandahar, which had been held by the Shah of Persia since the beginning of his reign. He then continued to pursue the traditional policy of a Chakra-vartin by an endeavour to extend his sovereignty over the Dekhan, an aim which was only partly realised at the time of his death ten years later. The Dekhan, like the rest of Musalman India at the time of Akbar's accession, was in a state of political chaos. Its history till the death of Ali 'Adil Shah of Bijāpūr in 1580 has been already told. The dynastic quarrels between Bijāpūr, Ahmadnagar, and other rival Muhammadan kingdoms were renewed directly the purpose of their temporary reconciliation—the destruction of the military power of Vijayanagar—had been effected. In 1586 one of the claimants to the throne of Ahmadnagar, Burhan Nizām Shah, had appealed for Akbar's intervention on his behalf—his brother, Murtezza Nizām Shah, the actual king, having become unfit to reign on account of insanity. The expedition which Akbar sent to support him was, however, unsuccessful, and Burhan became a refugee at the Mogul court. Murtezza soon after attempted to murder his own son by setting fire to his bed, but the youth escaped and retaliated by murdering his father by a similar method. He inaugurated his succession to the throne by the

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wholesale murder of the surviving members of the royal family, but ten months later was himself imprisoned and put to death by his Prime Minister, after a reign of terror in which mob-law prevailed and the Indian Muhammadans made a general massacre of their foreign co-religionists.

Burhan's son, Ismail Nizām Shah, was then put upon the throne, but two years later the nobles of Ahmadnagar invited Burhan himself to take it, which he did with the help of an army sent from Bijāpūr, where his sister, Chand Bībī, Ali 'Adil Shah's widow, had considerable influence. It was not long, however, before Burhan was at war with his relative, Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shah II, the ruler of Bijāpūr, and in league with the Hindu Rāja of Vijayanagar, Rāmrāj's brother and successor—a reversal of the situation which obtained some thirty years previously, when Ibrāhīm's uncle had allied himself with Rāmrāj to crush Ahmadnagar. Ibrāhīm, however, with the help of his Mahratta cavalry, defeated the allied forces under the walls of Sholapur, and Burhan died soon afterwards, leaving the throne of Ahmadnagar to his son Ibrāhīm Nizām Shah, born of an Abyssinian mother. After a reign of four months Ibrāhīm of Ahmadnagar was killed in battle, and the Abyssinians of the royal body-guard thereupon espoused the cause of his infant son, Bahādur Nizām Shah, and invited his great-aunt, Chand Bībī, to assume the regency during his minority.

Chand Bībī, as has been told, was the daughter of Husain, the third king of the Nizām Shāhi dynasty of Ahmadnagar, and consequently of Brahman descent. From the time of her marriage with Ali 'Adil Shah, as a part of the compact made by the Musalman dynasties of the Dekhan for the destruction of Vijayanagar, she had played a conspicuous part in the politics of Bijāpūr. She had acted as regent during the minority of her husband's nephew and successor, Ibrāhīm, a task which demanded the highest courage and diplomatic skill. At one time she was the ruling power in the State, at another confined in prison by the minister who opposed her. At last, in 1584, when Ibrāhīm's sister was married to her

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nephew, the son of Murtezza Nizām Shah, she left Bijāpūr to reside at her brother's court—a change which by no means diminished the difficulties of her position. Eleven years later, when the Abyssinians of the royal body-guard offered her the regency of Ahmadnagar, there were three competitors for the throne besides her own grand-nephew. The leader of one of the rival parties had written to Akbar's son, Prince Murād, then in command of the Mogul army in Gujerat, asking for his assistance. The Prince eagerly seized the opportunity, and, together with the Khan Khanān, whom Akbar sent to assist him, marched to Ahmadnagar. But when the Mogul forces arrived under the walls of the fortress they found that the approach of the foreign interlopers—as the Moguls were still regarded in the Dekhan—had caused the majority of the contending factions to unite under Chand Bībī in offering a desperate resistance to their entry into the city.

Chand Bībī's gallant defence of Ahmadnagar has made her one of the heroines of Indian folk-lore in the Dekhan. She aroused the enthusiasm of the garrison and the admiration of the imperialists by appearing on the ramparts veiled but with sword in hand to encourage the defenders, recklessly exposing herself to the heavy fire of the enemy and directing the repair of the breaches made by the Mogul mines. At the same time she despatched messengers to call to her aid the forces of Bijāpūr and other states whose independence would be threatened by the success of the imperialists. Akbar, on the other hand, was badly served in this campaign by his son, Prince Murād, whom he trusted to uphold the prestige of the house of Timūr. The Prince, though not lacking in courage, was a confirmed drunkard, hot-tempered and insolent towards the able and experienced general deputed by Akbar to advise him. After a siege of about four months the imperialists had made little headway and found themselves confronted by a formidable confederation of the other Musalmān kingdoms in the Dekhan. Prince Murād was therefore glad to accept Chand Bībī's offer to come to terms, by which Ahmadnagar retained its independence by surrendering its claims to the suzerainty of Berar.

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Chand Bībī's troubles were not, however, ended. Soon after this great success the disloyalty of her Prime Minister and a dispute regarding the boundaries of Berar involved her in a fresh conflict with the Moguls, though she herself was most anxious to avoid it. This time the imperialists narrowly escaped a serious defeat by the united forces of the Dekhan, though the situation was saved by the courage and resource of the Khan Khanān. Renewed disputes between the latter and Prince Murād, and the generally unsatisfactory state of affairs, induced Akbar in the beginning of 1598 to recall the Khan Khanān and send Abul Fazl into the Dekhan as High Commissioner to take general charge and send Prince Murād back to court, but the latter died of delirium tremens the day of Abul Fazl's arrival. Chand Bībī, finding herself in the clutches of a gang of unscrupulous intriguers, saw the policy of making the best terms possible with the Mogul power, and entered into negotiations with Abul Fazl. A treaty was signed; but the Abyssinians and some of the Muhammadans of the Dekhan, resolved not to submit to Akbar's suzerainty, took the matter out of her hands, and the brave Sultāna was murdered in her palace by a mob of soldiers excited by rumours that she was betraying them to the enemy. Ahmadnagar, after another siege of about six months, fell in 1601 to the assault of the imperial army under the command of Akbar's youngest son, Prince Dāniyāl. Chand Bībī's ward, Bahādur Nizām Shah, was taken prisoner and confined in the fortress of Gwalior.

Akbar, meanwhile, acting on Abul Fazl's advice, had left Lahore, and in order to be in close touch with the situation entered the Dekhan through the territories of his feudatory Bahādur Khan, the last of the Farūki dynasty of Khāndēsh. The latter had only recently come to the throne, after having been imprisoned by his predecessor for thirty years —for it was the custom of the rulers of Khāndēsh to keep their nearest relatives under lock and key to guard against conspiracies. Bahādur was therefore totally ignorant of political affairs, and foolishly resolved to oppose the Mogul power, trusting to the impregnability of the famous fortress of

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Asirgarh, which experienced soldiers considered to be the strongest in Asia and perhaps in the whole world. The place, however, surrendered to Akbar after a siege of eleven months, mainly owing to a virulent epidemic which swept off a great part of the garrison and reduced the remnants to despair. Bahādur was sent to join his ally of Ahmadnagar in captivity at Gwalior and Khāndēsh was annexed to the Mogul Empire. The success of the Mogul arms induced the Sultans of Bijāpūr and Golconda to come to an understanding with Akbar, and a marriage was arranged between Prince Dāniyāl and a daughter of Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shah. In 1602 Akbar returned in triumph to Agra and assumed the title of Emperor of the Dekhan, leaving Abul Fazl in administrative charge.

It was not, indeed, the success of the campaign in the Dekhan, but a serious situation which had arisen since his departure from Hindustan, which induced Akbar to return. Like many other great men, Akbar was unfortunate in his children, none of whom inherited the high intellectual power and strong moral fibre of their father. The hordes of parasites and low adventurers on the outskirts of the court—Akbar's secret enemies—were powerless against the Pādshah himself, but took their revenge in debauching his children and in stimulating their headstrong tempers. Strong and wise as Akbar had proved himself to be in controlling the turbulence and unscrupulousness of his nobles, he had shown an indulgence bordering on weakness towards the misconduct of his children. The good counsellors whom Akbar appointed to guide them not infrequently found themselves unsupported by the Pādshah in checking the misbehaviour of their wards. Prince Salīm, the eldest—now past any tutor's control, for he was over thirty years of age—was not only an habitual drunkard like his brothers, but had already made an exhibition of fiendish cruelty which Akbar would not have tolerated in any of his generals. He had an implacable hatred of the honest Abul Fazl, who had often risked annoying his sovereign by bringing Salīm's misconduct to his notice. Akbar seemed to consider that any punishment inflicted upon the imperial princes would be

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more damaging to the prestige of the dynasty than the disgrace they brought upon it themselves, and endeavoured to wean them from their vices by a father's loving counsel and to bring them to a higher sense of responsibility by giving them a larger share in the administration of the empire. Before his departure from the Dekhan Akbar had formally nominated Prince Salīm as his successor, made him Viceroy of Ajmīr, with the redoubtable Rāja Mān Singh as his adviser, and entrusted him with the conduct of a new campaign against the Rāna of Mewār. But as soon as fresh disturbances in Bengal called Mān Singh back to his own viceroyalty Salīm flung off all restraint and, thinking that the situation in the Dekhan gave him a fine opportunity, marched his army towards Agra with the bold intention of turning the Pādshah off his throne. The governor of the fortress, however, shut the gates against him. Salīm then marched off to Allahābād, and, having succeeded in occupying the fortress and seizing the contents of the imperial treasury, publicly assumed the royal title.

Akbar, as soon as the news reached him, acted with his usual promptitude and returned to Agra with a picked body of the imperial army; but instead of taking the field against his disloyal son, as Salīm no doubt expected, sent him an affectionate letter warning him against the consequences of continued disloyalty, but promising forgiveness if he would at once return to his allegiance. Salīm thought it politic to send a submissive reply full of professions of filial devotion, but being informed by his spies that the main body of the imperial army was still in the Dekhan, he marched to meet the Pādshah at the head of a considerable force which he had collected. Akbar then sent a stern letter ordering him either to come to court with a small retinue or to return at once to Allahābād. Salīm reluctantly accepted the former alternative and a reconciliation took place. Akbar, hoping to keep him out of further mischief, granted him the provinces of Bengal and Orissa. At the same time the Pādshah wrote a full account of what had happened to his faithful henchman, Abul Fazl, and ordered him to return to court, where his presence was urgently required.

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Salīm, who was well informed by his spies, fearing that Abul Fazl's influence with his father might diminish his prospects of succession to the throne, resolved to get rid of him, and wrote to one of his cronies, Bīr Singh, Rāja of Urchah, asking him to waylay and kill Fazl when he passed through the Rāja's territories—the route he would most likely choose as the most direct. Abul Fazl was warned of his danger, yet, with his touching faith in the virtue of the Pādshah's protection, could not be persuaded either to choose a safer way or to provide himself with a strong escort, but pressed forward with all speed on his journey to Agra accompanied only by a few trusty retainers. He disdained to fly when the Rāja with his myrmidons came in sight, and died bravely defending himself to the last, a truly loyal member of the Dīn-Ilāhī.

Salīm's exultation when he received from Bīr Singh the head of his hated enemy was great. For Akbar the loss of his devoted friend was a cruel blow. For several days he gave himself up to uncontrolled grief, refusing food and seeing no one. "If Salīm wished to be Emperor he might have killed me and spared Abul Fazl," were his words when at last the whole story was told to him. He then gave peremptory orders for the punishment of the assassin, Bīr Singh, and a strong force was immediately sent to bring him to court alive or dead. The Rāja, after several fights, was driven into the jungles, and evaded capture until Akbar's death, when he reappeared and was handsomely rewarded by Jahāngīr, who made no attempt to conceal his own share in the murder. But not even this atrocious outrage provoked the Pādshah to take steps for the punishment of Salīm. He only continued to use his utmost efforts to conciliate his son's violent and hateful temper.

Akbar's modern biographers have held this to be a great blot on his character, without due consideration of all the circumstances. The standard of political ethics which Akbar and intimate friends sought to maintain was far above the average of the ruling class to which they belonged. The majority of that class regarded Salīm not as a murderer, but as a very acute and successful diplomatist—a judgment which

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would be upheld by the text-books of a certain modern school of diplomacy. Akbar, who was now sixty years of age, had suffered periodically from an internal disorder, and the loss of so many of his dearest friends and staunchest supporters might well have affected his usual buoyant spirits and resolute courage. Most of the great men who had helped him in securing the foundations of the Mogul Empire—Shaikh Mubārak, Faizi,[1] Abul Fazl, Todar Mall, and Bhagwān Dās—had already gone. Akbar was more than ever alone. Of his three surviving sons, Murād had died; his brother Dāniyāl was rapidly drinking himself to death. Salīm, in spite of his debauchery and savage temper, was a strong man who could count upon powerful support in the imperial army. If the Pādshāh had proceeded to use military force against him he might have provoked a conflict which would have plunged the whole empire into confusion, shattered the entire fabric he had so laboriously built up, and opened the gates once more to India's foreign aggressors.

The only potential candidate for the succession whose reputation stood higher than Salīm's was the Prince's youngest son, Khurram, who eventually succeeded his father under the title of Shah Jahān and did much as a ruler to justify his grandfather's good opinion of him. Rāja Mān Singh, Salīm's brother-in-law, and now the most powerful of Akbar's Hindu nobles, was in favour of the nomination of his nephew by marriage, Prince Khusru — Khurram's eldest brother. A violent feud already existed between the latter and his father, and Akbar seemed unwilling to do anything to widen the breach. Under all the circumstances he probably showed the wisest statesmanship in continuing to recognize Salīm's hereditary right to the throne according to the traditions of the house of Timūr, though plenty of precedents might have been found in Indo-Aryan constitutional law for setting him aside.

Akbar only lived about three years after the death of Abul

[1] Faizi died seven years before the murder of Abul Fazl. Even Badāuni draws a pathetic picture of Akbar hurrying with the court hakims to the bedside of the dying poet, gently lifting up his head, and joining in Abul Fazl's grief when he found that the end had come.

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Fazl in 1602, but persisted to the end in his endeavours to control his incorrigible son. Knowing that Salīm was amenable to womanly influence (under the spell of Nur Jahān he later on developed some sense of regal responsibility), the Pādshah sent the Sultāna Salīma, Bairām Khan's widow and now one of Akbar's wives, who according to an Indian custom had adopted Salīm as her son after the death of his own mother, to reason with him—the result being that he appeared again at court in a chastened mood. Akbar received him kindly, gave him permission to use the imperial insignia, and sent him back to Rājputāna to renew the campaign against the Rāna of Mewār—for the Rajputs of Mewār some years previously had emerged from their etreats in the Aravali hills and had gradually won back a great deal of lost ground. But the Prince conducted himself so badly as a general in the field that Akbar recalled him and sent him back to Allahābād. There his continued drunkenness and the violent scenes which took place between himself and his equally intemperate son, Khusru, so affected the mind of Khusru's mother that she took poison and died. In a fit of repentance Salīm reappeared at Akbar's court and submitted to being put under medical treatment for a time; but the quarrels between the Prince and his eldest son, who did his best to inflame Akbar's mind against his father, again became a public scandal.

That these domestic troubles weighed heavily upon Akbar and hastened his end there can be no doubt. It is unprofitable to speculate what Akbar might have done if he had lived longer and Salīm's outrageous conduct had continued. But the Pādshah knew well that the only alternatives to the course he actually took were to put his son to death or imprison him for life, and these were alternatives which he could never bring himself to take, for in spite of all he loved his son, and under 'Shaikhu Bābā's'[1] violent temperament there were hidden some of the fine qualities of Bābur's stock.

In the beginning of 1605 another blow fell upon Akbar—

[1] The pet name which Akbar gave Salīm, after his foster-father, the Shaikh Salīm Chishtī.

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the arrival of news from the Dekhan that Prince Dāniyāl had died in a fit of delirium tremens before his marriage with the Princess of Bijāpūr had been consummated. Salīm was now his only surviving son. In the middle of September the Pādshah was taken seriously ill, and the administration of the empire was left in the hands of his foster-brother, the Khan-i-'Azam, and Rāja Mān Singh, both of whom would have welcomed the slightest word from their sovereign in favour of the nomination of Prince Khusru as his successor. But as his end drew near the Pādshah called Salīm to his bedside and, in the presence of all the nobles, signified his dying wish that he should gird on the sword of Humāyūn and take the imperial turban on his head. Akbar passed away on October 15, 1605, having just entered his sixty-fourth year, and Salīm succeeded without serious opposition from any side under the title of Jahāngīr, 'the World-conqueror.'

Akbar was buried with great pomp at Sikandra in a splendid mausoleum, which he himself had commenced some time before his death, strikingly different from those of his predecessors, for it was planned, like the Panch Mahāll at Fatehpur, on the lines of the five-storied pyramidal pavilions which were the meeting-places of the Buddhist Sangha and other religious orders. It seems as if Akbar had intended it as the central assembly hall of the Dīn-Ilāhī, but Jahāngīr, who posed as an orthodox Musalman and pretended to consider his father as a wanderer from the fold of Islam who repented on his death-bed, altered the design of the top story so as to make it more conventionally Muslim, a desecration which accounts for its curiously truncated appearance.

Akbar has shared the fate of all great reformers in having his personal character unjustly assailed, his motives impugned, and his actions distorted, upon evidence which hardly bears judicial examination. Thus some attribute his death to the opium habit,[1] bringing forward a statement of one of the Jesuit Fathers that the Pādshah was reprehensibly drowsy when listening to his discourses on religion. Others, more

[1] Vincent Smith, *Asiatic Review*, July 1915.

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malicious, declare that he accidentally poisoned himself by swallowing a deadly pill intended for one of his nobles—a hoary fable of unknown antiquity which has been fastened on the tomb of many other monarchs besides Akbar. The truth seems to be that Akbar, following his physician's advice, was accustomed to take a weak decoction of opium for the internal disorder from which he suffered, and it may well be believed that during the stress and sorrow of his later years he sometimes sought to soothe his troubled mind by the same means. He was neither an ascetic nor a saint of the conventional type; but few of the great rulers of the earth can show a better record for deeds of righteousness, or more honourably and consistently maintained their ideals of a religious life devoted to the service of humanity. In the Western sense his mission was political rather than religious; but in his endeavours to make the highest religious principles the motive power of State policy he won an imperishable name in Indian history and lifted the political ethics of Islam into a higher plane than they had ever reached before.

It does not detract from his greatness as a man and ruler that his achievements fell short of his ideals—that the Dīn-Ilāhī did not accomplish the spiritual regeneration of the ruling classes or wipe off the slate all the records of previous centuries of misgovernment, and that his schemes did not embrace a full recognition of the ancient Aryan system of self-government upon which the economic strength and political greatness of India stood firm longer than has been the case with any other empire in the world. But Akbar's endeavours to realise the Aryan ideal are still worthy of imitation both by British rulers of India and by all statesmen for whom politics is a religion rather than a game of craft and skill.

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